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THE POEMS

OF

ROBERT NICOLL.

POEMS

BY

5278
cc

ROBERT NICOLL.

5089

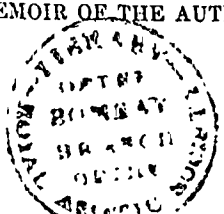
"Finds tongues in trees—books in the running brooks—
Sermons in stones—and good in everything."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

SECOND EDITION: WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONS,

AND

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.



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TO MRS. JOHNSTONE,

AUTHORESS OF "ELIZABETH DE BRUCE," ETC.,

THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

9x 8 9

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SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF ROBERT NICOLL.

"I HAVE written my *heart* in my Poems; and rude, unfinished, and hasty as they are, it can be read there." Thus wrote Robert Nicoll, to a stranger whose literary talents he admired, and to whom he had sent a copy of his poems, when that individual, appreciating the gift, requested to learn something more of the giver.

There is certainly no collection of poems in the language which more vividly reflects the character, tastes, and tendencies of the writer at the age at which they were composed. And Nicoll's future life was so brief that there was not time for material change, although he could ever have become any other man than the one indicated by his youthful poetry;—than the lover and worshipper of unadorned Nature, the poet of the social and domestic affections; and, above all, the apostle of the moral, and, of what he considered no mean part of the self-same thing, the political, regeneration of society. But if his heart may be read in his book, that book is also the substantial record of his life; and an attempt to illustrate its contents from personal knowledge, and by a few facts and gleanings from his scanty correspondence, is all that is proposed in the present sketch.

Nicoll's life was as simple and uneventful, as it was short, bright, and unspotted. His future biographer will have few events to relate, and no youthful follies or frailties to extenuate, or none that his friends could perceive,—and he never had an enemy. His moral qualities were in all respects happily balanced. He had none of the oddities or eccentricities of self-taught men; and his sterling good sense was at least commensurate with his genius, and with his mental activity and energy. He was one of those youths of whom the most prosaic might have safely predicted that, if life and health were spared, he must, in spite of the dangerous gift of poetic genius, become a prosperous, and, in any case, a good and a respected man; for he possessed, in ample measure, those qualities which ensure success in life, of the highest kind, and in the best way.

But youths and men like Robert Nicoll do not, even in his favoured native land, spring out of the earth in a genial, warm morning, like a crop of mushrooms. God had endowed him with many precious gifts; but these might either have lain long dormant, or been for ever extinguished, save for the added blessings which called them into early activity. The discipline of adversity was not wanting; and among the happy influences that were around his childhood, was having a mother worthy of such a son. To his mother, Nicoll, in after life, attributed whatever of distinction he had attained. Thus the theory, whether fanciful or not, that the mother is her children's mental ancestor, receives another confirmation in the case of the subject of this sketch. There is, however, no fancy in saying, that his mother was his first and best instructor; his *educator* in the highest and widest sense of the term.

Robert Nicoll was born on the 7th January, 1814, in the farm-house of Little Tulliebeltane, in the parish of Auchtergaven, in Perthshire, which lies nearly half way between Perth and Dunkeld. His father, Mr. Robert Nicoll, was at that period a farmer, in comfortable circumstances for his station and locality; his mother was Grace Fenwick, one of the daughters of that venerable "Elder John" of whom Nicoll speaks so frequently and affectionately in his poems. Robert was the second son, in a family of nine children. His elder brother died in childhood, and Robert thus became the "eldest son." Both the families from which he immediately sprung had been settled for generations in the same neighbourhood, and counted a long pedigree of the kind that is still the proudest boast of rural Scotland,—decent, honest, God-fearing people. By the recollection of his mother, Robert, when nine months old, could speak as infants speak; at eighteen months he knew his letters; and when five years old he could read the New Testament. His mother had up to this time had leisure to be the teacher of her intelligent and lively child: but now woful reverse was impending over the family. Mr. Nicoll had become security, to the amount of five or six hundred pounds, for a connexion by marriage, who failed and absconded; and the utter ruin of his own family was the almost immediate consequence. He gave up his entire property to satisfy the creditors of this individual; he lost even the lease of his farm, and, with his wife and several young children, left the farm-house and became a day-labourer on the fields he had lately rented, with nothing to sustain his wife and himself save the consciousness of unblemished and unblamed integrity. Robert

Nicoll was thus, from the date of his earliest recollection, the son of a very poor man, the inmate of a very lowly home, the eldest of a struggling family. Field labour was the daily lot of his father, and, at certain seasons of the year, of his mother also, as far as was compatible with the care of her young and increasing family; and the children, as soon as they were considered fit for labour, were one by one set to work. Yet that goodness and mercy which temper the severest lot of the virtuous poor were around them; and, at the lowest ebb of their fortunes, many of the best blessings of life must have mingled with, and sweetened, their toils and hardships. That could not have been other than a cheerful as well as a happy home and hearth, from which sprung the germs of Nicoll's poetry,—his songs, his descriptions of rustic manners, and his portraits of rustic contemporaries.

But it is wished, as far as possible, that he should here tell his own story. In 1834, and when Robert was consequently in his twentieth year, Mr. Johnstone of Edinburgh, who had received many communications from him, was induced to make some inquiry about an obscure youth in Perth, not yet quite perfect in his orthography, but who wrote very promising verses, and, what was much more remarkable, vigorous *radical* prose, breathing a high moral tone. In reply to Mr. Johnstone's inquiry, young Nicoll sent him a sketch of his history. Having told of his father's misfortunes, he says:—"He was ruined 'out of house and hold.' From that day to this, he has gained his own and his children's bread by the sweat of his brow. I was then too young to know the full extent of our misfortunes; but, young as I was, I saw and felt a great change. My mo-

ther, in her early years, was an ardent book-woman. When she became poor, her time was too precious to admit of its being spent in reading, and I generally read to her while she was working; for she took care that her children should not want education. Ever since I can remember, I was a keen and earnest reader. Before I was six years of age, I read every book that came in my way, and had gone twice through my grandfather's small collection, though I had never been at school.

"When I had attained my sixth year, I was sent to the parish school, which was three miles distant, and I generally read going and returning. To this day, I can walk as quickly as my neighbours, and read at the same time with the greatest ease. I was sent to the herding at seven years of age, and continued herding all summer, and attending school all winter with my '*fee*.'"

In a few notes written by Nicoll's younger brother, Mr. William Nicoll, now of Glasgow, in adverting to Robert's childhood, it is said:—"Even at this early period, Robert was a voracious reader, and never went to the herding without a book in his plaid, and he generally read both going and returning from school. From his studious disposition, though a favourite with the other boys from his sweetness of temper, he hardly ever went by any other name than *The Minister*. When about twelve, he was taken from herding, and sent to work in the garden of a neighbouring proprietor. With the difference, that he had now less time for reading than before, the change in his employment made very little change in his habits. He went to school during the winter as usual."

In one of those winters he began the Latin Rudi-

ments; and, besides writing and accounts, he seems to have acquired some knowledge of geometry. We should, however, say, that Nicoll knew little of any science, and nothing of any language, save English, and his own beautiful Doric. He never made any pretensions of the sort. His slight acquaintance with the Latin Rudiments, must, however, have been of use to him when he subsequently taught himself grammar from Cobbett's useful Compendium. But his regular school-learning, whatever its amount, was all acquired at intervals, and in the dull season of the year, when he could not work out of doors.

His brother mentions, that, when Robert was about fourteen, he attended a young student named Marshall,—a person of great talent and promise,—who opened a school in the neighbouring village, and who died in a year or two afterwards, much regretted. Their connexion was more like that of friends than of teacher and scholar; and comparing his own slender attainments with those of Marshall, Robert learnt the important secret of his own deficiencies, and was stimulated to more strenuous efforts. After Mr. Marshall had removed to another part of the country, Robert attended, for a short time, at schools taught by two other young men; and this, with six weeks at the parish school of Monedie, comprised the whole of his school-education; which, casual and slight as it may seem, gave him the elements of knowledge, and the invaluable power of self-improvement,—all that, to a mind like his, was essential. Before this time, and when he was between eleven and twelve, a book-club had been established in the village of the parish; and in his letter to Mr. Johnstone, he says, "When I had saved a sufficient quantity of silver coin, I became a

member. I had previously devoured all the books to be got in the parish for love, and I soon devoured all those in the library for money. Besides, by that time I began to get larger 'fees,' (the Scotch word is the best,) and I was able to pay 1s. 6d. a month, for a month or two, to a bookseller in Perth, for reading. From him I got many new works; and among the rest the Waverley Novels. With them I was enchanted. They opened up new sources of interest, and thought, of which I before knew nothing. I can yet look with no common feelings on the wood, in which, while herding, I read Kenilworth."

Was that beautiful fiction, which, next to the Bride of Lammermoor, is the deepest tragedy that Scott has penned, ever more truly appreciated in the stately saloons and splendid drawing-rooms of grandeur and nobility, than by that poor little herd-boy? Has it ever, in such places, given equal pleasure? More it could not give.

When about thirteen, Nicoll began to scribble his thoughts, and to make rhymes; and his brother relates, that he was so far honoured as, at this age, to become the correspondent of a provincial newspaper, the manager of which, in requital of small scraps of parish news, sent him an occasional copy of the journal. We cannot tell how Robert obtained this distinguished post; but the editor afterwards found a correspondent more suitable, at least in point of age, and Robert was deprived of his office. His brother states, that he was rather chagrined at the abrupt disruption of this, his first connexion with the press.

It was probably in consequence of his acquaintance with Mr. Marshall, that the change thus described in his letter to Mr. Johnstone took place. "As nearly as I can remem-

ber, I began to write my thoughts when I was thirteen years of age, and continued to do so at intervals until I was sixteen, when, despairing of ever being able to write the English language correctly, I made a bonfire of my papers, and wrote no more till I was eighteen.

"My excursive course of reading, among both poets and prosers, gave me many pleasures of which my fellows knew nothing; but it likewise made me more sensitive to the insults and degradations that a dependent must suffer. You cannot know the horrors of dependence; but I have felt them, and have registered a vow in heaven, that I shall be independent, though it be but on a crust and water.

"To further my progress in life, I bound myself apprentice to Mrs. J. H. Robertson, wine-merchant and grocer in Perth. When I came to Perth, I bought Cobbett's English Grammar, and by constant study soon made myself master of it, and then commenced writing as before; and you know the result.

"When I first came to Perth, a gentleman lent me his right to the Perth Library, and thus I procured many works I could not get before; Milton's Prose Works, Locke's Works, and, what I prized more than all, a few of Bentham's, with many other works in various departments of literature and science, which I had not had the good fortune to read before.

"I was twenty years of age in the month of January last; and my apprenticeship expires in September next. By that time I hope, by close study, to have made myself a good French scholar; and I intend, if I can raise the monies, to emigrate to the United States of North America.

"I do not rate my literary productions too highly; but they have all a definite purpose—that of trying to raise the many. I am a Radical in every sense of the term, and I must stand by my order. I am employed in working for my mistress from seven o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock at night; and I must therefore write when others are asleep. During winter, to sit without fire is a hard task: but summer is now coming—and then!

"It may, perhaps, appear ridiculous to fill a letter with babblings of oneself; but when a person who has never known any one interest themselves in him, who has existed as a cipher in society, is kindly asked to tell his own story, how he will gossip! . . . . . To Mrs. Johnstone and yourself, what can I say in return for your kindness? Nothing; but if ever I can return you good for good, I will do it."

Such was the first letter that Nicoll had probably ever written to any one save his brother, then a school-boy, or his mother. When he says, "I bound myself apprentice," he relates the simple fact; though a step of this important kind is usually taken by parents in behalf of their children. But by this time he had been for nine or ten years earning "fees," the gentle name for wages in the rural parts of Scotland; and probably he was also in the habit of looking out for employment for himself. The intelligent children of the poor early acquire habits of self-reliance and independence, of which those in different circumstances can have no idea. Nay, besides acting for himself, Robert, as his mind expanded in the wider field of observation and actual business which Perth afforded him, acted in some respects for the whole family, some of whom,

as they became fit for business, subsequently followed him into Perth in capacities nearly similar to his own. By a simple, and yet energetic and thoughtful deed, for a lad of his years, he laid the foundation of a fortunate change in the circumstances of the family. He perceived how miserably small were the gains of his parents from mere out-door labour; and, with two pounds which he had carefully saved up, he induced his mother to commence a little shop in her cottage at Tulliebeltane, and to become a regular attendant at the weekly market of Perth, where she could dispose of those rural commodities which she had purchased or procured in exchange for her groceries and other small wares. This proved a great resource in enabling this excellent person to bring up and educate her younger children; all of whom have received a better, or a more systematic education than did Robert, and this without abating in the least their early habits of industry. Robert's education, it will be seen, might, from an early period, very safely have been left to himself.

Nicoll's letters from Perth to his brother William afford a few passing glimpses of his probationary years, and of his habits of thought and his aspirations, while bright visions were rising before his youthful fancy, from out the clearing mists of futurity. When he had been about a year at his apprenticeship, he thus gives William sage counsel as to the best method of pursuing his studies, and reports upon his own progress:—

"I received your *learned* and ——— [a mis-spelt French word] epistle; and I must confess I was agreeably surprised by its contents: inasmuch as you have this week discovered that nothing can be accomplished without la-

bour. For, in your former letter, you seemed to think you could work Bonnycastle as you would a cart-horse. But why despair, my pretty fellow? Commence with Practical Surveying, and read on to the end, and think attentively as you read, and I will bet you two to one, that in a month you will have it all in your head like a horn." After some good advice about systematizing his studies, the student is recommended not to exalt memory above the reasoning faculty; and thus exhorted:—"But do you *think*, and engrave the principle on the tables of your heart, from which nothing can ever again efface it! That is the manner of proceeding I have taken; and I every day feel the good effects of it; and if life and strength be spared me, there is something that whispers that I may yet, at some future period, distinguish myself, either by prose or verse, in the republic of letters.

"Perhaps you won't believe me, but I declare to you that I am grown very industrious. After this fashion, I read a good deal in the morning while sluggards are snoring; all day I attend to my business; and in the fore-nights [the early part of the evening] I learn my grammar; while the morning of Sunday is spent in writing hymns, or other harmless poetical pieces. Would you have thought it—*I*, even *I*, am reckoned, in Perth, a very early riser. Tell it not in the Coates—proclaim it not in the gates of Tullie-beltane! I hope you will pardon the inaccuracies of this letter, as I have never given it a second reading. By the by, I will send you one of my darling MS. poems one of these days. Now don't laugh."

The reader need not be reminded that these extracts are from the hasty and unrestrained communications of one

country boy to another still younger than himself, and his brother. But as genuine *bits* of a mind of no common order, they are precious.

The Reform agitation, an era in the history of mind in Great Britain the effects of which yet remain to be developed, was now at the height; and Nicoll, prepared by his previous studies and ruminations, though they had not been directly political, in May 1832, writes to his brother, first speaking in the usual way of the difficulty of writing a letter when one has nothing to say, till he recollects, like a philosopher of eighteen, "that no one who looks upon his brethren of mankind, and the beauties of the earth, with an inquiring eye, can ever be at a loss for a subject,"—and launches forth:—

"To look upon mankind—to observe the various airs they give themselves, is indeed calculated to make a person a misanthrope. The chief of an Indian tribe daily goes to his tent-door and points out to the sun the path he is to travel for the day; and the despots of Europe wish to point out to mankind the road, till time shall be no longer. The head prince of a village, or the lord of a few acres, equally with those, rule, in mind as well as in body, the crouching wretches who labour unseen; and all combine to keep themselves uppermost, at the expense of their fellow-creatures, unheeding though misery may follow their path: that is nothing compared to self-aggrandizement. And those who submit to be thus tyrannized over, what are they? we are tempted to ask. Are they *men*, who listen to every word as if it proceeded from God—who obey every motion as if it were one from the Deity? They are not men: they are slaves, in every sense of the word, be-

cause they have made themselves so when God created them freemen."

Having followed this theme at greater length, and concluded with a well-known quotation from Campbell—

> "Fierce in his eye the fire of valour burns,
> And as the *slave* departs the *man* returns"—

the young Radical philosopher turns to another and a cognate topic. "To see the power of riches—to see how their possessor is adored, is followed, and caressed; to see him indulge in every vice, in every folly, and followed and caressed still:—And to see the same man—still the same—stripped by fortune of the riches he bestowed upon his [vices,] where, then, are the crowds who follow in his train? where are those who followed him and applauded his very blasphemies? Why, they are gone to follow others like in manners; and to laugh at him whom they have ruined for this world and the next. To look on such a picture is enough to make men curse the name of men who turn God's moral world into a wilderness, *his* image into a devil, and his word into a cloak for their practices! But no, we will not curse; we look on men as brothers, and leave them to their God."

In the Spring of 1832, and when he was consequently eighteen, he writes his brother thus:—

"In your last letter you seem to think that I have given up all thoughts of America; but I must tell you such is not the case. My mother used to say I was very fickle; but if I were not still in the thoughts of going there, I would deserve the name of fickleness indeed." Having dwelt on the advantages of America over his own country,

"Scotland," as he says, "though it be," for a man who has nothing to depend on but his industry and talents, he concludes,—"If a person is clever and behaves himself, he is as sure of a competence as I am sure of my being a *poet;* and that is sure enough, in all conscience! . . . . You may laugh in your sleeve at my poetry; but 'wait a wee,' and mayhap you may laugh on the wrong side of your mouth, as Cobbett says of his political enemies. Poetry is one of the greatest earthly blessings that God bestows upon man. Poets are generally poor men; but none of them would give up their fancy, imagination, or whatever it is that forms a poet, for all the riches of Golconda's mines. You have heard of Coleridge. He is a scholar than whom there are few better; but, by devoting his time to the muses, he has never yet been, as I may say, independent. Yet this unfortunate son of genius says,—'Poetry has soothed my afflictions, heightened my joys, and thrown a broad and beautiful halo over the best and worst scenes of my life.'

"But you must not suppose, for all that, that I will not work while I write; for, as Thomas Moore says in the midst of a sentimental love song, 'We must all dine.' So say I; and though Moore has often been laughed at, for the ridiculous expression, I am almost tempted to think it the most sensible thing he has ever written.

"I get on trippingly with my grammar; and always as I proceed I feel myself understanding it better; and I hope I may yet be a good grammarian. If once learned and practised, I will not be afraid, if health be spared me, to fight my way through the world.———By the way, I think it would be the best policy for you to write a *little*

better, and a little closer.* As to America, my plan is this. I will try and get a good engagement for a year or two, and then, when I have got as much cash as will carry me, go to it; and when I can get myself comfortably settled, you and the rest may come out also, without fear, as you would have a home awaiting you. But this is always supposing we get no encouragement at home. Now for poetry."

A stanza on Sunday Morning fills up the sheet; and, after it is folded, the blank corners are garnished with such lines as the following :—

> The tenant to his landlord hied,
> And told his tale of poverty :—
> "I pardon you," the landlord cried,
> "Your clothes are rent enough, I see."

Four years later—four years to Nicoll of intense mental activity, we find him writing from Dundee to a young literary friend; and, after lamenting the venality of the newspaper press, saying, "I have lately been reading the Recollections of Coleridge. What a mighty intellect was lost in that man for want of a little energy—a little determination! He was ruined, as thousands have been, by the accursed aristocracy. I almost cried when I found him saying, that instead of completing, or rather beginning, his projected great work, he was obliged to write twaddle for ——— ———, and compose MS. sermons, to support his station in society! Good God! that a man with an intellect so noble should have been a slave to con-

* The reader need not be reminded that this is the free and confidential letter of one brother to another—of a clever and sanguine lad of eighteen, but lately from the country, to a boy two or three years younger; who has, however, so well profited by the advice, that the handwriting of the man is excellent, and just as close as it should be.

ventionalities. Had he dared to be poor—had he known that bread, and cheese, and water could nourish the body as well as the choicest viands—that coarse woollens could cover it as well as the finest silks—and had he dared to act on that knowledge, how little of his time would it have taken to have sufficed his wants, and how much leisure would he have had for giving shape and utterance to his immortal thoughts! He could not say with Jean Paul, 'What matters, if God's heaven be within a man's head, whether its outside covering be a silken cowl or a greasy nightcap'; and through fear of losing caste in this world—this speck and point of time merely—he consented to forego 'his station' in the world of mind. Oh! for an hour of John Milton, to teach such men to 'act and comprehend.'"

This may to many sound like rhodomontade, and it, unfortunately for life, argues very slender experience of real life; but this much may be said for the young enthusiast:—he was living according to his own doctrines, and literally on bread, and cheese, and water, "that he might have leisure to give shape and utterance to his thoughts."

It was Nicoll's habit, during the long days, to rise before five o'clock, and repair to the North Inch of Perth, where he wrote in the open air until seven o'clock, when it was time to attend to business. Again, when at nine o'clock in the evening his daily labour was over, his studies were recommenced, and were often carried far into the morning. Such rigorous application in a growing lad, but recently transferred to a town from the brae-side—where he had lived all his days in the open air like a bird—and to constant confinement in a shop, could not be without ill effects on his health, though we have heard his mother impute the

origin of the malady which ultimately cut him off to some internal injury, or strain of the chest, which he received from thoughtlessly taking a too heavy lift.

About this time, Nicoll became a member of a debating society of young men, the object of which appears to have been partly political, and partly literary. Of this society his brother says, "Robert's manner, that of a raw country boy, was against him; but his indomitable energy and perseverance soon overcame every difficulty, and in a very short space of time he was able to speak with great fluency. The habit of extemporary speaking which he acquired in the Young Men's Debating Society of Perth, gave him that confidence in himself which enabled him in a year or two afterwards [in Dundee] successfully to address larger assemblies of more critical listeners. To improve himself in composition, besides his ordinary exercises he was in the habit of writing short stories, of which he had always a few lying by him. One of them, 'Il Zingaro,' he sent to *Johnstone's Magazine*."

But the history of that most momentous event in the life of a young author—of the first-published article—may come with far more grace from his own pen than from that of any other individual. In what a happy flutter of spirits must the subjoined letter have been penned!

"DEAR WILLIAM,—I have great news to tell you! About the beginning of last month I wrote a tale for one of my exercises in composition, and as I had bestowed some pains upon it, I was loath to lose it. Accordingly, I sent it, addressed to Mr. Johnstone, for insertion in *Johnstone's Magazine;* and, to my surprise, it has been inserted in last Number. You will find it in page 106. It is a radical story;

for I wished to tell truth in the guise of fiction. * * * I have told no person of it but Mr. ———, and on Wednesday my *aunties*, M** and C********, who observed—'Dinna be an author; they are aye puir.' In this world's goods they may be, but they have better riches than these. At least, my works will not hinder my riches; for I sit down to write when others go to sleep, or to amuse themselves; and I find myself fitter to do my work after half a night's writing than others after half a night's idiotical amusement, or worse debauchery. You must forgive my bad writing, for the sake of a bad pen."

This must have been great news for all in Tulliebeltane. But we do not learn with what mixture of fear and hope, pride and mistrust, it was received in his mother's cottage, notwithstanding the prophetic warning of his prudent aunts. One year, nay, a half year later, Robert would probably have chosen more congenial confidants.

The *Radical* story, which found such honourable and unlooked-for acceptance, occupies about one page and a half of the Magazine. It is not only characteristic of Nicoll's mind at that fervent period, but at all after times. It is the tale of a gipsy youth, of fine and aspiring genius, who, smitten with love for a beautiful girl, becomes a water-carrier in an Italian city, and who, by resolutely enduring every kind of privation, and exerting wonderful energy, is enabled to become the pupil of an eminent painter, and finally acquires great eminence in his art, and obtains the hand of the object of his love and his exertions.

The tale has some foundation either in fact or in popular tradition. It commences in the vein of much of Nicoll's future writing. "From among the PEOPLE the greatest men

of every age have arisen. Those rich in worldly goods rarely find time for aught but luxurious enjoyments; while among the poor there are always a few who sanctify the hours saved from toil by striving to attain intellectual excellence. From among those few sometimes arise master-spirits, who give a tone, not only to the age in which they live, and to their own land, but to future generations, and to the whole world. The peculiar greatness of mental power is, that it does not blaze up in a corner, and then become extinct, but enlightens and delights all nations. . . . . Who can estimate the influence which the life and writings of Robert Burns have exerted on our national character? Who can estimate the good effects which the writings of Sir Walter Scott—so filled with human sympathies and wise examples—may yet exert on the destinies of mankind? We know no more heart-elating enjoyment than to peruse Benjamin Franklin's narrative of his own life: in which he tells of his rise from a runaway printer's boy to be the first philosopher of the day; and one of the founders of an empire the freest and happiest the world ever saw. Is the influence of all the kings that ever reigned to be for a moment compared with the silent mental power possessed by Franklin? . . . . But in our day it is comparatively an easy matter for the so-called *lower classes* to educate themselves. The gates of knowledge—of mental power—stand ever open."

Such is the preamble to *Il Zingaro*, and the first indication of the future radical poet and newspaper editor. Nicoll was now nineteen; and his letters and manuscript compositions show that, in the previous year, he had made rapid advancement, both in the power of thinking, in the

art of writing, and even in the lesser matters of orthography and grammatical accuracy.

Either from the effect of the internal crush he had received, from over-application, or perhaps from both causes, Robert's health became so much deranged towards the close of his apprenticeship, that it was abruptly terminated, by his kind and indulgent mistress sending him home to be nursed by his mother.* At leisure, in his native air, and among the "Ordé Braes," he recovered rapidly: and, in the month of September, of the same year, he, for the first time, visited Edinburgh, in quest of employment. This visit was made at a rather memorable period—the time of the "Grey Dinner." After giving the history of his private adventures in a letter to his father and mother, he continues:—

"Edinburgh was a sight worth seeing on Monday last. The streets from Newington, along the South and North Bridges, and Prince's Street, were crowded, or rather wedged. The whole side of the Calton Hill was paved with people. There must have been 40,000 on the line of Earl Grey's march. I saw him at the Waterloo Hôtel. He is a fresh-looking, bald-headed man, with a most determined curled lip. He is not old-looking. I thought the crowd would have shaken his hand off. He is a most beautiful speaker. Lord Brougham I saw at the college, and he looks far younger than I thought him. . . . . Lord Durham is a handsome man—dark-coloured, and clever-looking. . . .

"I paid sixpence to see the place that they had the dinner in—[the Grey Pavilion;] and truly it was more

* A younger brother, some years subsequently, succeeded Robert in the same establishment.

like one of the enchanted halls in the Arabian Nights, than anything else.

"If I get a situation, I shall write you; but if not, I shall be home on Saturday. Had I been a cloth-merchant, [draper] I might have got a dozen of situations.

"I have visited Mr. Johnstone, who has been remarkably kind. I was at my tea with him on Saturday. I saw his steam-press going, printing *Tait's Magazine*. It is a strange machine. A sheet of paper, of the proper size, is put in, and comes out at the other end, and printed on both sides."—Two years afterwards, and Nicoll was himself keeping one of those strange machines in full play, and stirring thousands with its productions.

At this time, he was, on his own earnest request, introduced to Mr. Robert Chambers, and Mr. Robert Gilfillan; for every one who wrote, and, above all, who wrote verses, was then a Magnate in his eyes. By every one that he met, he appears to have felt himself treated with kindness and liberality.

He returned home—it will scarcely be too much to say not greatly disappointed in not finding employment. His heart was already placed on a vocation very different from that to which he had been bred; and he might speedily have found what he did not in fact very anxiously seek. The pursuits of literature—to be connected in some way with books, and the press, were it but to breathe in the atmosphere of knowledge, was his secret and ardent desire. His friends in Edinburgh were, on the other hand, more desirous to repress, than to foster, his literary ardour; and anxious that he should stick to his trade, and, without abandoning either politics or the Muses, keep them, for the

present, in the back-ground. But this was not to be.—His future vocation was speedily determined;—and all was for the best.

He had, in fact, been offered a situation of the kind to which he had been bred, when, with very slender means, and some friendly aid and encouragement from acquaintances in Perth, he was induced to open a Circulating Library in Dundee. A shop was accordingly taken in that town, and the establishment was arranged on a scale of cheapness which would seem as extraordinary as were the frugal and self-denied habits of the young librarian, both laid open to the world.

Upon this plan of life Nicoll entered with all the ardour and energy belonging to his character. By means of his Library, he soon acquired an extensive acquaintance among the young mechanics and manufacturers of the place; and this year, 1835, became an important epoch in his life. He wrote largely and frequently for the liberal newspapers of the town; he delivered political lectures; he made speeches; he augmented his stores of knowledge by reading; he wrote poems; and he prepared and published his volume of *Poems and Lyrics*. Nicoll was of the order of young men of genius, who more require the rein than the spur: and his sage Edinburgh friends certainly gave no more encouragement to his appearance as an author—which was deemed premature, and, consequently, injurious to what they imagined his real powers, when time had been allowed for their fair developement—than they had done to his change of profession. But a good many persons in his own rank of life, chiefly clever young working-men, had subscribed for the projected work,

which was put to press in one of the newspaper-offices of Dundee: and when Robert, on coming to Edinburgh to find a publisher, got a note of introduction from a friend to Mr. Tait, and found that gentleman (although booksellers are not generally, in these times, fond of poetical literature) willing to be publisher, he returned home in high spirits. His volume shortly afterwards appeared, and was received with great kindness by his friends, and with that warm approbation by the press which the author modestly considered far above its merits.

We have the authority of his brother for saying, that, "while Robert acknowledged that his poems were the means of placing him in a situation to attempt something better, he regretted that he had published so soon." And, in point of fact, though he wrote verses while he was able to hold a pencil, he published no more, with the exception of one or two pieces at most, which, while he was editor of the *Leeds Times*, appeared in *Tait's Magazine*, through the intervention of a friend.

When Robert had been some time in Dundee, his original want of anything deserving to be called capital, and his literary studies and engagements, (which, if quite unproductive, yet occupied considerable time,) induced him to receive as a partner, a young tradesman who had a little money; while he himself attempted a small periodical work which did not succeed. The library business, hardly able to support one, could ill support two; and, at Whitsunday, 1836, Nicoll made it entirely over to his partner, retiring from the concern without any gain, and without any obligation:—he had, indeed, lost by it. This concern must have occasioned great anxiety to his mother, who had,

however, made those efforts which only a mother can make to assist and support him in it.

In entering upon the concern, he had come under, and involved his mother in, pecuniary engagements, very trifling in amount indeed, as the whole was under £20, but which were to him and her as harassing and depressing as hundreds or thousands might have been in different circumstances. He had also, shortly after coming to Dundee, formed an ardent attachment to a very pretty and amiable girl, who eventually became his wife. He had thus every motive for endeavouring to establish himself as soon as possible in some suitable and permanent occupation. This young person, Nicoll's first and only love, was Miss Alice Suter, the only child of a widow, and the niece of the editor of one of the newspapers to which Nicoll contributed. She naturally shared his anxiety about their future prospects, and stimulated him to look for employment elsewhere. But his strong-hearted mother was still, as ever, his support in trial, and the confidant of all his hopes and fears.

When he had almost made up his mind to make over the business to his partner, and quit Dundee for Edinburgh or London, in the hope of finding employment connected with the newspaper press, we find him writing to his mother; and the fact of such a letter, as we have to cite, being written by a young man in the circumstances of Nicoll, is not half so remarkable, as that it was addressed to a woman in the condition of his mother, with the undoubting confidence that she fully comprehended and sympathized in every sentiment of his heart, and in every aspiration of his mind. It is as justly as beautifully said by Mr. Laing in his late work,—"We often hear, What country but Scotland ever

produced a Burns among her peasantry? But the next question for the social economist is, What country but Scotland ever produced a peasantry for whom a Burns could write? Burns had a public of his own in his own station in life, who could feel and appreciate his poetry, long before he was known to the upper class of Scotch people; and, in fact, he never was known or appreciated by the upper class. . . . . It is a peculiar feature in the social condition of our lowest labouring class in Scotland, that none, perhaps in Europe, of the same class, have so few physical, and so many intellectual wants and gratifications. Luxury, or even comfort in diet and lodging, is unknown. Oatmeal, milk, potatoes, kail, herrings, and rarely salt meat, are the chief food; a wretched, dark, damp, mud-floored hovel the usual kind of dwelling; yet, with these wants and discomforts in their physical condition, which is far below that of the same class abroad, we never miss a book, perhaps a periodical, a sitting in the Kirk, a good suit of clothes for Sunday wear. . . . . The labouring man's subscriptions in Scotland to his book-club, his newspaper turn, his Bible Society, his Missionary Society, his kirk, or minister if he be a Seceder, and his neighbourly aid of the distressed, are expenditure upon intellectual and moral gratifications of a higher cast than the music-scrapings, singing, dancing, play-going, and novel-reading, of a much higher class of persons in Germany."

The above passage affords the key to a Scottish matron, living under the exact circumstances described, fully appreciating a letter like the following, addressed to her by her son:—

"DUNDEE, *6th February*, 1836.

"DEAR MOTHER,—I have just received the box with the articles,* and your letter. I entirely forgot to send you a book; but you may be sure of one next time. I send this letter by D. C——, and would have sent a book likewise, but do not like to trouble him. Enclosed you will find a number of letters, which I thought you would like to see. Be sure to keep them clean, and return them soon. I shall write you again before going to Edinburgh; and you may depend I shall not give up my shop till I have something certain to compensate for it.

"That money of R.'s† hangs like a millstone about my neck. If I had it paid I would never borrow again from mortal man. But do not mistake me, mother; I am not one of those men who faint and falter in the great battle of life. God has given me too strong a heart for that. I look upon earth as a place where every man is set to struggle, and to work, that he may be made humble and pure-hearted, and fit for that better land for which earth is a preparation—to which earth is the gate. Cowardly is that man who bows before the storm of life—who runs not the needful race manfully, and with a cheerful heart. If men would but consider how little of *real* evil there is in all the ills of which they are so much afraid—poverty included—there would be more virtue and happiness, and less world and mammon-worship on earth than is. I think, mother, that to me has been given talent; and if so, that talent was given to make it useful to man.

* Probably his clean linen, and the oaten-bread baked for him in the cottage at Tulliebeltane, thirty miles off.

† This refers to a few pounds which had been lent him, when he opened his library at Dundee.

To man it cannot be made a source of happiness unless it be cultivated; and cultivated it cannot be unless I think little of [here some words are obliterated]; and much and well of purifying and enlightening the soul. This is my philosophy; and its motto is—

> Despair, thy name is written on
> The roll of common men.

Half the unhappiness of life springs from looking back to griefs which are past, and forward with fear to the future. That is not my way. I am determined never to bend to the storm that is coming, and never to look back on it after it has passed. Fear not for me, dear mother; for I feel myself daily growing firmer, and more hopeful in spirit. The more I think and reflect—and thinking, instead of reading, is now my occupation—I feel that, whether I be growing richer or not, I am growing a wiser man, which is far better. Pain, poverty, and all the other wild beasts of life which so affright others, I am so bold as to think I could look in the face without shrinking, without losing respect for myself, faith in man's high destinies, and trust in God. There is a point which it costs much mental toil and struggling to gain, but which, when once gained, a man can look down from, as a traveller from a lofty mountain, on storms raging below, while he is walking in sunshine. That I have yet gained this point in life I will not say, but I feel myself daily nearer it. I would write long, but have no more time, and must stop short in the middle of my letter. We are in the shop much as usual. Hoping my father will get better soon, I am, dear mother, your son,

"Robert Nicoll."

The only regular correspondent of Nicoll at this time was the young man to whom he addressed the remarks on the fate of Coleridge that have been cited above. There were many points of resemblance in their position, and some in their character; and the friendship struck up with the unknown admirer of his poetry, who was himself a man of great and original powers of mind and fancy, overflowed in epistles which, in spite of the old high postage, proceeded at the brisk pace of twenty-one with a first literary friend. Nicoll's literary friends in Edinburgh rarely wrote to him, and never more than the *needful*, when they entertained the hope of forwarding his views, or of being of use to him in some way or other; but here were the warm sympathies of youth, and a cordial outpouring of soul on both sides. The correspondence is highly characteristic of both the individuals, who continued cordial friends up to the death of Nicoll, though they never chanced once to meet.

A few extracts from this correspondence will elucidate Nicoll's state of mind at this, and, indeed, at every future, period of his short life. His philosophy, if we may so apply the term,—his high feeling of his vocation,—his "definite purpose" in all that he wrote, we conceive more remarkable, and far more rare than even his attainments as a Scottish poet. We have seen that from his boyish years it had been his resolution

> To scorn delights,
> And live laborious days;

and neither love, politics, nor the fascinations of society made him once waver in the resolve. His correspondent

had been desirous to know if the young poet whose verses he admired, was correct in his habits, and steady in his character, before he gave him his full friendship, and he made inquiry of a mutual friend, who informed Nicoll of the circumstance. Now, with great gleefulness and cheerfulness of disposition, a keen perception of humour, and true relish for fun, there was in Robert not only the most perfect purity of mind and life, but, as has been said, a lack of frailties and eccentricities somewhat detrimental to the personal interest usually taken in the passionate sons of song,—who are, perhaps, not the worse liked by their wiser, prosaic patrons and friends for being at least a little odd and wayward, if not irregular, in their manners and habits.

The inquiry as to his morals, gave him opportunity to reply in this strain :—"You are right in thinking that I would honour you for being anxious to know whether I was 'steady' or not; and I am happier than I can well express to find, that in you I have not only met with a man of undoubted genius, but with a man who likewise knows what is due to that genius,—who knows how to respect himself, and disdains to sully the light which GOD has kindled in his soul by the unholy and accursed fumes of vice and immorality. I fervently hope that the time has for ever gone by when genius was considered an excuse for evil—when the man who could appreciate and express the beautiful and true, was supposed to be at liberty to scorn all truth, and all beauty, mental and moral. Our influence on mankind may be small, but it will ever be exerted to purify, and better, and enlighten. The time has come—the day of human improvement is growing to noon, and henceforth men, with free and disenthralled souls, will strive to make

them, in very truth, 'a temple where a God might dwell.' If the men of mind would but join to intellectual power more single-mindedness and purity of heart,—if they would but strive to be morally as well as intellectually great, there would be fewer complaints against man's proneness to mammon-worship. The only legitimate power in sublunary things, *Mind*, would, as it ought—ay, and as it will, if men be true to themselves—have its due influence and honour. Literary men, too, now begin to see the power and glory of their own mission; and this is both an omen and an earnest of much good. Oh! for a man like blind old John Milton to lead the way in moral and intellectual improvement to moral and intellectual light and glory. . . . . .

"Of the butterflies who have degraded literature by their evil ways, until it has become something almost to be scorned at, and who have made one branch of it—namely poetry—to be regarded *not* in the light of a God-given gift for blessing and hallowing earth, and man, and nature, but as something for the amusement of fools, and the eulogy of knaves—of those creatures who lie below contempt, were their doings not so mischievous, you need entertain no fear. . . . . "

In tenderly ministering to, or endeavouring to brace, while he soothed, the morbid mind of this friend, for whom he had the warmest regard—and who merited his regard, in spite of his capricious fits, whether of real or of merely pen-and-ink despondency—Nicoll sometimes recurred to his own early and real difficulties, and to his continued manful struggle with poverty; if the man may properly be called poor, whose clear income was probably not six shillings a-week,

but who could live upon less. He owned that he also had at times felt crushed in hope and spirit; but now, he says, "*Time* has made my heart firmer, adversity has knit me to endurance, and prepared me to meet all fortunes, if not smilingly, at least carelessly. You cannot feel thus,—but I do. What makes the difference? I will tell you, Charles. I am a younger man than you, but my struggle began earlier. From seven years of age to this hour, I have been dependent only on my own head and hands for everything—for very bread. Long years ago—ay, even in childhood—adversity made me think, and feel, and suffer; and would pride allow me, I could tell the world many a deep, deep tragedy enacted in the heart of a poor, forgotten, uncared-for boy. Have you ever known those

> Tortures, alone the poor can know,
> The proud alone can feel?

I hope not; for callousness to the world and its ways is too dearly bought by such suffering. I have known it—ay, to my heart's core; and while the breath of life is in my body I can never forget. But I thank God, that though I felt and suffered, the scathing blast neither blunted my perceptions of natural and moral beauty, nor, by withering the affections of my heart, made me a selfish man. Often when I look back, I wonder how I bore the burden,—how I did not end the evil day at once and for ever. Pride saved me then; and it encourages me now. Is it to be borne, that while the selfish, mean-souled, grovelling multitude toil and win, the true soul and the brave heart shall faint and fail? Never. Though disdaining to use the arts and subterfuges by which others conquer, the

time comes for work, and if the man be ready, he takes his place where he ought. Of myself, and the little I find time to do, truly I can say—

> One boon from human being I never had,
> Save life, and the frail flesh-covering
> With which 'tis clad."

This is the only occasion in which we find Nicoll indulging in this vein. And here it might have been, in some degree, excited by sympathy with his gloomy friend. His natural character was cheerful and hopeful. When a herd-boy, or a little assistant-worker in a neighbouring gentleman's garden, he had at times suffered, silently and bitterly, the proud man's scorn; and probably he felt as indignity treatment which a boy of less sensibility might have thought nothing of. In his beautiful poem—"*When I was herdin' kye*"—he alludes to these early feelings. We have heard a friend impute his radicalism, or hostility to the aristocracy, to remembrance of the harsh and ignominious treatment which he had received from his employers when a boy—a child rather—engaged in rustic labour. Besides the pride and sensibility with which Nature had largely endowed him, it is also to be kept in mind, that he belonged to a family who, in the same neighbourhood where they dwelt in poverty, had seen better days. His radicalism, however, rested on a broader foundation, though the sense of social injustice may have been thus first awakened. No man ever stood more proudly, as well as firmly by his Order than Robert Nicoll.

Upon another occasion, his friend—who was very apt to despond, or with whom sentimental despondency was, perhaps, first an affectation, and then a habit, a not uncommon

case among self-educated, clever men—had probably been complaining of his daily drudgery, one perhaps of the most decided marks of an ill-regulated mind, so long as men, however highly gifted, while in this world,

"Maun do something for their bread;"——

and Nicoll, who never gave way to this kind of temper, who was, at all times, a hard, unflinching labourer, and had a high idea of his vocation, thus replies:—"What you say of newspaper-writing is true—true as truth itself; but you forget one part. It would indeed be hangman's work to write articles one day to be forgotten to-morrow, if this were all; but you forget the comfort—the repayment. If one prejudice is overthrown—one error rendered untenable; if but one step in advance be the consequence of your articles and mine—the consequences of the labour of all true men—are we not deeply repaid? Whenever I feel despondency creeping upon me—whenever the thought rises in my mind, that I am wasting the 'two talents' on the passing instead of the durable, I think of the glorious mission which all have who struggle for truth and the right cause; and then I can say—'What am I that I should repine; am not I an instrument, however unworthy, in the great work of human redemption?—Would to God, dear ———, we had a press totally free; for then, men would dare to speak the truth, not only in politics, but in literature. . . . . Is truth never to have fair play in the fields of literature, where all should be her own?"

Nicoll's fits of despondency, moods to which all men are liable, whether poetical or prosaic, dull or bright, were rare and short; and though subject to attacks of ill-health,

often proceeding from over-exertion and mental excitement, and long without encouraging or fixed prospects of any kind, he never really abated of heart or hope.

When we have cited an introductory passage of Nicoll's first letter to his young friend, we shall have done more to place the real man before the reader, by giving the confession of his faith, than could be accomplished by long pages of description or panegyric. He says:—

"Amid all this world's woe, and sorrow, and evil, great is my faith in human goodness and truth; and an entire love of humanity is my religion. Whether I am worthy of becoming the object of such a friendship as I would wish to inspire, it becomes not me to say: but this much I may hazard, that in my short course through life—for as yet one-and-twenty is the sum of my years—I have never feared an enemy, nor failed a friend; and I live in the hope that I never shall. For the rest, I have written my *heart* in my poems; and rude, and unfinished, and hasty as they are, it can be read there. Your sentiments on literature—the literature of the present day, are mine. I have long felt the falsehood, or rather the want of truth, which pervades it; and save when, like Falstaff, seduced by 'evil company,' I have been a worshipper in Nature's Temple, and intend to be so. . . . . But I must tell you what sort of an animal bears the name of Robert Nicoll. Don't be alarmed; I mean not to 'take my own life' just now.

"I was born in a rural parish of the Scottish lowlands:" And he here repeats the story of his father's bankruptcy, and the consequent hardships and destitution of the family, continuing—"I commenced 'hard work' at eight years of

age; and from that day to this I have struggled onward through every phase of rural life, gathering knowledge as I best could. Here I am, then, at twenty-one, drunk with the poetry of life—though my own lot has been something of the hardest—having poured from a full heart a few rough, rude *lilts*, and living in the hope of writing more and better. A Radical in all things, I am entering into literary life, ready and willing to take what fortune may send,—

'For, gude be thankit, I can plough.'

I do not rate my published volume too highly, for I know its defects; but I think, that by keeping to Nature—to what Wordsworth has called the 'great sympathies'—I shall yet do better. If I do not, it shall not be for want of close, strict, untiring perseverance,—or single-minded devotion to literature."

Having, in the spring of 1836, made up his mind to try his fortunes in London, Robert wrote to his friends in Edinburgh for such letters of introduction as they could, with propriety, give him. This scheme appeared so hazardous and hopeless to those the most deeply interested in his well-being, those who had even regretted his early abandonment of his own business, and exclusive devotion to literature, that Mr. Tait kindly offered him some temporary employment in his warehouse until something better should occur. But he tells it best himself to his correspondent:—

"EDINBURGH, PARKSIDE, 11*th June*, 1836.

"The last time I wrote, I expected to have by this time been with you at Nottingham. But when I came to Edinburgh, *on my way to Hull*, I found Tait, and all my other

friends, decidedly against my going to London without some certain employment before me. At last, to keep me here, Tait offered me some employment in the meantime, until I can get an editorship of some newspaper, which, I have no doubt, will be shortly. . . . . The moment I get a newspaper, I mean to take a fortnight of leave of absence, and bend my way to N——. Perhaps staying here was the best way after all. I have present employment at least; and my prospects of succeeding shortly are good, while London was all chance—sink or swim, succeed or fail. I wish the world were at the devil altogether; 'tis nought but toil and trouble,—all weariness to the flesh, and double weariness to the spirit. Nevertheless, it would be cowardly not to fight our hour; and we must, therefore, do our best—till the tale be told—the song ended—the bond sealed—the game, which men call life, played: so be it."

In the same letter occurs the following passage, drawn forth by his cordial correspondent having made him the confidant of an attachment which ended in matrimony, though some time later than Nicoll's own marriage:—

"The sentence I liked best in your last letter was that which closed it; and I liked it, *not* because it contained your approbation of something of mine, but because it told me you had found a woman to love, and to be loved by. You *must* be happy. I ask not, I care not, if she be beautiful, accomplished, or wealthy—for this I care not, but I *know* that she must have a noble heart, or —— had never loved her."

He had not yet confided the secret of his own engagement to any one beyond his immediate family circle.

During the few months of this season that Nicoll lived in Edinburgh, he became acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Howitt, who were that summer travelling in Scotland; and he spent a good deal of his leisure time at Laverock Bank, where his last days were too soon to be spent. Many little anecdotes of him at this and other times dwell on the memory of his Edinburgh friends, though they may not have the same interest for the public. To the most watchful of these friends, to woman's eyes, his state of health even at this time appeared very far from being satisfactory, though he made no complaint whatever, and probably had no feeling or warning of approaching danger.

His attachment in Dundee, and his extreme anxiety to relieve his mother from the small pecuniary involvements, (great to her,) which she had incurred in order to enable him to establish his library, rendered him exceedingly desirous to find the employment for which his friends conceived him, with all his disadvantages, at least as well qualified as many who filled similar situations; and those whose advice had kept him in Edinburgh, were as happy as himself, when, by the kind intervention of Mr. Tait, he procured the situation of editor of the *Leeds Times*, with even the comparatively narrow salary of £100 a-year. He made a short farewell visit to his mother, and to his betrothed in Dundee; and returning to Edinburgh, took leave of his friends there, and set out for Leeds, in high spirits; Mr. Tait taking due care of the respectability of his outer man, which Robert considered little more than do the lilies of the field. His mind was instantly fired and absorbed by the duties of his new calling, and by the realization of some of his soaring hopes

of "making the world better yet." He had had considerable experience, while in Dundee, in writing for newspapers, and in addressing Radical audiences; and he possessed the eminent qualification of understanding, and keenly sympathizing in all the feelings and objects of the masses. What was called the "faltering policy" of the Whigs, had, at this time, gone far to alienate the Reformers of the working-class; and accordingly, with the Whigs the young Radical editor kept no terms; nor could he, in the case of their organs, though his natural manners were mild and conciliatory, appear to comprehend the ordinary conventionalities of party warfare, or the courtesies of rival editorship. He would stoop to nothing but the truth, and the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. His friends in Edinburgh, who, probably on very ample grounds, considered themselves sufficiently Liberal, and sufficiently stanch, were even somewhat scandalized by his unmeasured and unsparing attacks on the Ministerial paper, the *Leeds Mercury*, and its respectable conductor.

So perfectly was Nicoll adapted to the wants of the crisis, and with so much enthusiasm and energy did he devote himself to his harassing and multifarious duties, that in a few weeks after his arrival in Leeds, the circulation of the *Times* began to rise, and continued to increase with unprecedented rapidity. He had gone to Leeds in August; and in October he wrote to his Laverock Bank friends, that he had had a severe cold, and was, in return, advised to get lodgings out of the town if possible, and to be careful against exposure to cold. His strict temperance, or rather abstemiousness, was favourable to his health at this time; although, on the other hand, he must have lived in an almost

constant fever of excitement from one cause or another, from the period that he went to Leeds, until the hour that he left it. The success of the paper gave him very great pleasure, for his heart was in every word that he said in it; and he had himself the fullest faith in the truths and opinions that he was diffusing.

After he had been for some time in Leeds, we find him writing in high spirits to his brother William, who had, before this period, been apprenticed to a cloth-merchant in Perth:—

"You will see I am speaking boldly out, and the people here like it; and the proprietor of the *Leeds Times* is aware that it is to my exertions he owes the wonderful success of the paper. We are near 3000, and increasing at the rate of 200 a-week. . . . . We are beating both Whigs and Tories in Yorkshire rarely. . . . . I am engaged on a long poem just now, which will be by far the best thing I have ever written. It is founded on the story of Arnold of Bresica, which you will find in Gibbon about the year 1150. Read it. You will see what a glorious subject it is.—Was not you a glorious dinner at Halifax? It made the souls of the aristocracy quake. . . . . The Howitts, William and Mary, are living in London, and ——— was at their house with a great company of literary people, among whom the conversation fell on myself. After praising my poetry as first-rate, what think you was the compliment Mary Howitt paid me?—why, that I had 'the finest eyes' (ye gods and little fishes!) she had ever seen! Now, she has seen the eyes of Southey, Moore, Campbell, Wordsworth; in short, she has seen the eyes of all the prosers and poets

of the age—and *mine* the finest! But as Solomon says—'all is vanity.' Cunning chap that Solomon. . . . .

"P.S.—I like Hobson very much. He never sees the paper till it be printed. I mean to have a higher salary though. The *Perth Chronicle* won't do unless they speak up. What's the use of mumbling?"

To his literary friend and correspondent, who had also about this time obtained an editorship, he writes towards the end of the year:

"I see you are beginning to tell me that I now see the truth of what you told me of the world's unworthiness; but stop a little. I am not sad as yet, though a little tried in spirit at being as it were bound to the wheel, and hindered in a great degree from those pursuits which I love so well; and with which I had hoped to have entwined my name. But if I am hindered from feeling the soul of poetry amid woods and fields, I yet trust I am struggling for something worth prizing,—something of which I am not ashamed, and need not be. If there be aught on earth worthy of aspiring to, it is the lot of him who is enabled to do something for his miserable and suffering fellow-men; and this you and I will try to do at least. Let us not complain.

"Your first number is excellent. You are sure of success; but a word in your ear: give fewer extracts from the papers, and more news. You will find this advice worth attending to. . . . . You will get the *Times* regularly. It is succeeding gloriously. The circulation is now at 3000 a-week, and it is still rising rapidly. Don't I give them the pure doctrine? The truth makes

people stare, and buy likewise,—so 'tis both pleasant and profitable.

"How do you get on with *Tait?* Did he not pay me a compliment last month, by dubbing me the Ultra-Radical, and writing up the Mongrel Tory-Whig *Mercury*,* as the Radical? However, it is all fair; but had the *Times* been in need of a puff, it would have been *darned.*

"How is E——? I trust well and happy. And now for a secret. I am going down to Dundee next week to be married! Ye gods and little fishes!"

Even those who condemned the rashness and violence of Nicoll's opinions, and his indecorous attacks on the Whig party, (for it was ever the especial object of his hostility,) must have given him full credit for sincerity. And truly in the alleged peccant state of the public press, it is refreshing to peruse such an extract as the following, from the confidential correspondence of two very clever young provincial editors. The case was this:—

His friend had been engaged to conduct a Whig or Ministerial newspaper, started in an agricultural English county "to serve the interest." The Radical editor was cautioned by his constituents not to be rash, and to "enlighten and elevate the population *gradually*;" in short, to serve the Whig party, and nothing more. He rebelled against the proprietors at a very early period of his engagement, and threw up his situation, though with no brilliant prospect elsewhere —indeed with no prospect whatever. On this occasion, Nicoll, a warm sympathizer, writes him,—"You have done right. Whatever may be the consequences, you ought not to have submitted for an hour. There are always

* The *Leeds Mercury.*

plenty of slavish souls in the world without breaking into the harness such a spirit as yours. Had you asked me for my advice, I would have bidden you do as you have done. The brutes among whom you were placed would soon have broken your spirit, or, by constant iteration, have swayed you from the right. Keep up your spirits. You are higher at this moment in my estimation, in your own, and in that of every honest man, than ever you were before. I trust it is not in the power of disappointment and vexation to bend such a soul as yours. Tait's advice was just such as I would have expected from him—honest as honesty itself. You must never again accept a paper but in a manufacturing town, where you can tell the truth without fear or favour; and that you will not be long in finding a paper suitable to you I am certain. You are now known, and I defy the world to keep down one like you." After other ardent expressions of sympathy, and some matters of advice and detail, he sends this message to the young lady to whom his friend was engaged, and who might be presumed deeply disappointed at seeing her lover thrown out of employment, and their mutual hopes again deferred to an indefinite period. "Tell E—— from me to estimate, as she ought, the nobility and determination of the man who dared to act as you have done ———. Prudent men will say that you are hasty. But you have done right, whatever may be the consequences."

For the encouragement of young editors to maintain their integrity, and persevere in the honest course, it should be told that the individual in question almost immediately obtained a better appointment.

Towards the middle of December, 1836, Nicoll stole a few days from his incessant toils, and came down to Dundee to be married. His father and mother met him there; and, without loss of time, he returned to Leeds, with his bride. Her mother, who thenceforward formed a member of his household, soon followed. It was placed upon the most prudent and economical foundation; and while any measure of health continued to be spared to him, his home was, in all respects, as happy as any one in which young and pure affection ever found a sanctuary. His wife, younger than himself by a year or two, possessed considerable personal beauty, and sweet and gentle manners; but, above all, unbounded admiration for the talents of her husband. Her health was, like his own, delicate, and her constitution apparently much more fragile. Their elder and wiser friends might, for this and other prudential reasons, have fancied their union premature; but this also was probably for the best. In his brief career, poor Nicoll tasted largely of all the higher enjoyments of life,—

> Of all the pleasures of the heart,
> The lover and the friend.

Though Mrs. Nicoll must, in the first period of their married life, have appeared likely to precede him to the grave, she survived him for a considerable period, before falling a victim to the fatal malady which carried him off.

During the spring of 1837, Nicoll frequently alludes to the happiness of his humble home, in letters addressed to his young friend. Between it and his office duties, between politics and poetry, his time was divided and very fully occupied. His habits and opportunities had never at any time

led him into what is called society; and in a letter to Edinburgh, after he had been several months in Leeds, he mentions that he had no acquaintances, and had never once dined out of his own lodgings.

His office duties were of themselves incessant and harassing. The *Leeds Times* is a paper of large size ; and in reporting, condensing news, writing a great deal for every number of the print, and maintaining a wide correspondence with the working-men, reformers in different parts of the country, he had no assistant. Yet amidst these engagements, poetry was not wholly forgotten. The numerous additions to the present edition of his Poems and Lyrics were mostly written in Leeds, in the autumn of 1836, and in the early part of 1837; and, as evidence of haste, they were all written in pencil. In the spring of 1837, to increase his salary, which was but a slender remuneration for his labours, he was induced to write the leading article for a paper just then started in Sheffield. This, taken altogether, was dreadful overtasking even for a man in full health. The proprietors of that paper still owe Nicoll's family the reward of labours, which, with his rapidly declining strength, must have been far too severe. But his spirit was unfaltering; and his courage, his fortitude, and power of endurance, long held out against every difficulty. All this while his friends in Edinburgh and in Perthshire had no reason to be apprehensive on his account. When he did write, it was in high spirits at the success of the paper under his management, and his own prospects. He had lately been very happily and suitably married; and as a brief season of economy was sufficient to retrieve whatever might be deemed imprudent in that step, Robert's well-

wishers had for him everything to hope, and nothing to fear.

The spring of 1837 proved cold and ungenial, and Nicoll felt its ill influence; but there were deeper causes at work than weather and season. He had long carried in his breast the seeds of disease, which, under other circumstances, might have been overcome, or have been kept dormant, but which many causes now contributed to develope.

The finishing blow to his health, was given by the general election in the summer of the same year, when the town of Leeds was contested by Sir William Molesworth, in opposition to Sir John Beckett. Into this contest Nicoll naturally threw himself with his whole heart and soul. As an enthusiastic Radical, as the Editor of a liberal print, as a man now looked up to by a considerable portion of the ten-pound electors, and the intelligent non-electors, he was triply pledged to this cause; and those who have contemplated his character, even as it is faintly indicated in this sketch, may imagine the intensity and ardour with which he exerted himself. After a very severe struggle, the liberal cause triumphed in Leeds; but the contest left poor Nicoll in such a state of exhaustion that his wife afterwards said, and we can well believe it, that if Sir William Molesworth had failed, Robert would have died on the instant. He was destined to linger on for a few more suffering months.

By this time it was the month of August; and Nicoll's illness had lasted so long, and the symptoms had become so urgent, that his wife and her mother felt it their duty to apprize his parents of the delicate state of his health. They accordingly wrote to Tulliebeltane. He had,

however, been so averse to make any communication that might alarm his mother, that she was warned not to tell whence the painful information had reached her; but to say, that a friend, who had seen him in Leeds, had informed her of Robert's illness. This will explain the commencement of the following letter, which is in reply to his mother's letter of anxious inquiry. It is the last letter he ever wrote to her :—

"LEEDS, *Wednesday*, 13*th Sept.*, 1837.

"MY OWN DEAR MOTHER,—This morning I received your letter. The 'kind' friend who was so particularly kind as to alarm you all out of your senses, need not come to my house again. Before, I did not write you all about my illness, because I did not wish to make you uneasy; but it shall be no longer so. I will tell you how it began—when it began—its progress—its present state."

Having described his case at length, and given the opinions of the medical men, and those of his wife and his mother-in-law, in the manner most likely to soothe the fears of his mother, he owns that he is very weak—that the quantity of medicine he was taking deprived him of appetite, and that he had made up his mind to be an invalid through the winter, and meant, if possible, to obtain a respite of a few weeks from labour; and he then proceeds to another subject, probably in answer to some message from his venerable and pious relative :—"My love to aunt and grandfather; tell both that I do not know how I could better serve my GOD than by serving my fellow-men. HE gave me a mission, and I trust I have done my best to fulfil it. As for you, dear mother, dear father, I bid you be of good cheer; I shall recover yet, though it will take a

while. And if I do not, I trust I am prepared calmly to meet the worst. My life has not yet been a long one, but I have borne much sickness—sickness such as opens the grave before men's eyes, and leads them to think of death; and I trust I have not borne this, and suffered, and thought in vain.

"I have told you the whole truth—every word of it; and you will see how exaggerated the account you have received must have been. I am sorry for Willie's illness. My love to him—to my own dear father—to Joe, Charlotte, and Charlie. . . . . We have had much rain here. I hope the harvest is progressing fast. I was dreaming last night about grandfather. I thought he and I were making hay on the green. My love to grandfather, —tell him not to be alarmed. Write soon, and tell Willie to write. How we long for letters from 'home.'"

About the time that this letter was written, a Delegate from the Working-Men's Association of London visited Leeds, on some political mission, and saw the now-famed Editor of the Times, whom he found apparently in the last stage of a decline. On his return to London, this Delegate apprized Robert's correspondent, so often alluded to; and that kind friend, besides writing immediately, entreating Nicoll to give himself a season of repose, and to come up to him with his wife, also wrote to Mr. Tait, to inform him of the full extent of Nicoll's danger. This round-about intelligence, which was the first intimation of his serious illness, greatly alarmed his Edinburgh friends; and the step was instantly taken, to which he so affectionately, and with an excess of grateful feeling, refers in the subjoined letter to his brother William. For some time

previous to this he had been unable to drag himself even to the printing-office; and his various weary and heavy tasks had been gone through at his own dwelling. From anything that appears, the proprietors of the newspaper knew much less about him than persons at a distance.

One kind friend whom he had found in Leeds, had, at this time, a lodging in Knaresborough; and he induced Robert and Mrs. Nicoll to go to that place for a fortnight, for relaxation and change of air. He rode about there on a donkey, seeming to enjoy at least the comparative ease and leisure of his position; and his young and anxious wife even flattered herself that he was getting better. His own letters, his own feelings, were a surer index to the truth.

"KNARESBOROUGH, 10*th October*, 1837.

"MY OWN DEAR KIND BROTHER,—Both your letters have been received, and I would have answered them long ago, had I been able. I came to this place, which is near Harrowgate, and eighteen miles from Leeds, about a fortnight ago; but I feel very little better for the change. My bowels are better; but I am miserably weak, and can eat little. My arm is as thin as that of a child a month old. Yet, it is strange, that with all this illness and weakness, I feel as it were no pain. My breast, cough, and all have not been so well for years. I feel no sickness, but as sound and wholesome as ever I did. The length of time I have been ill and my weakness alone frighten me; but whether I am to die or live, is in a wiser hand. I have been so long ill I grow peevish and discontented sometimes; but on the whole I keep up my spirits wonderfully. Alice bears up, and hopes for the best, as she ought to do. Oh, Willie! I wish I had you here for one day,—so much,

much I have to say about them all, in case it should end for the worst. It may not, but we should be prepared. I go home to Leeds again on Friday.

"Thank you for your kind dear letter; it brought sunshine to my sick weariness. I cried over it like a child. * * * * Sickness has its pains, but it has likewise its pleasures. From ———, and others, I have received such kind, kind letters; and the London Working-Men's Association, to whom I am known but by my efforts in the cause, have written me a letter of condolence filled with the kindest hopes and wishes.

"I have just received another letter from Tait, which made me weep with joy, and which will have the same effect upon you. He bids me send to him for money, if I need it; and urges me to leave Leeds and the paper instantly, and come to Edinburgh, where there is a house ready for me; and there to live, and attend to nothing but my health till I get better. He urges me to this with a father's kindness; and bids me feel neither care nor anxiety on any account. . . . . And so delicately, too, he offers and urges all this. How can I ever repay this man and the Johnstones for such kindness.—Should I do this? I know not. You admire my articles: they are written almost in torment.

"You will go to Tulliebeltane on Sunday, and read this letter to them. Tell them all this. I wish my mother to come here immediately to consult with her. I wish to see her. I think a sight of her would cure me. I am sure a breath of Scottish air would. Whenever I get well I could get a dozen editorships in a week, for I have now a name and a reputation.

"My mother must come immediately. Yet I feel regret

at leaving the paper, even for a season. Think on all that you, and I, and millions more have suffered by the system I live to war against, and then you will join with me in thinking every hour misspent which is not devoted to the good work.

"Dear, dear Willie, give my love to them all,—to my parents—to Joe—to Maggie—to Charlie—to aunt—to grandfather. Write, to say when my mother comes. Write often, often, and never mind postage. I have filled my paper, and have not said half of what I wished. * * * * * I can do nothing till I see my mother. I cannot find words to say how I feel Tait's kindness. Write soon. I have much more to say, but I am tired writing. This is the most beautiful country you ever saw, but I have no heart to enjoy it.—God bless you,

"Robert Nicoll."

The only hope which Nicoll's friends in Edinburgh could now entertain was placed in at once withdrawing him from his professional duties, and their attendant mental harassments, and in obtaining the best medical advice.

Though Nicoll left Leeds without one penny of debt, it could not be supposed that when he had been little more than one year in his situation, and that the year of his marriage, he could have saved anything. His little debt to his mother, or rather her obligations for him, still hung most painfully upon his mind. He had fondly hoped, instead of burthening, to be able to aid her and the family; and, in the meanwhile, he had involved her. The first look of his generous and devoted mother, who at once went up to him to Leeds,* must have banished these distressing feel-

* There is much false and injurious delicacy among all the ranks of British society, in speaking of pecuniary matters; yet it would be

ings. There was nothing to be thought of save restoring his health, if that were still possible; and in every event of ministering to his comfort and solace.

Nicoll now became impatient to reach Scotland; and he took leave of his friends, the Reformers of the West Riding, in a short address, which the deep sincerity of his heart, and the solemn circumstances in which he was placed, render doubly emphatic. It may be given as a specimen of his prose style:—

TO THE RADICALS OF THE WEST RIDING.

"BRETHREN!—Ill health compels me to leave your locality, where I have laboured earnestly and sincerely, and I trust not altogether without effect, in the holy work of human regeneration. I go to try the effect of my native air, as a last chance for life; and, after the last number, I am not responsible for anything which may appear in *The Leeds Times*, having ceased to be Editor of that paper from that date.

"I could not leave you without saying this much, without bid-

almost a sin against the finer humanities, if this absurd feeling were to lead to the suppression of an anecdote of Nicoll's mother, which, besides being characteristic of the woman, illustrates the noble character of the peasant-matrons of Scotland. The Nicolls, it need not be told, were a very poor family; the mother nobly struggling to educate her children; and, by this means, to raise their condition to the level from whence misfortune alone had driven them. Mrs. Nicoll had, by this time, acquired some little property, solely by her own exertions and industry; but she had no money to spare to defray the necessary expenses of a journey to Leeds, where her son lay, as she must have feared, dying, and languishing to see her. When a friend afterwards inquired how she had been able to incur this expense, as poor Robert was in no condition to assist her even to this extent, her blunt and noble reply was,—"Indeed, Mr ——, I shore for the siller." Her wages, as a reaper, her "harvest fee," was the only means by which she could honestly and independently fulfil her beloved son's dying wish, and accomplish the yearning desire of her own heart. It would indeed be a sin against whatever gives Scotland her proudest distinction among the nations, to suppress this anecdote of Robert Nicoll, and his mother. It reveals things to which wealth and grandeur may in reverence bow their heads!

ding you, one and all, farewell, at least for a season. If I am spared, you may yet hear of me as a Soldier of the People's side: if not, thank God ! there are millions of honest and noble men ready to help in the great work. Your cause emphatically is

> The holiest cause that pen or sword
> Of mortal ever lost or gained.

And that you may fight in that cause in an earnest, truthful, manly spirit, is the earnest prayer of one who never yet despaired of the ultimate triumph of truth.

" ROBERT NICOLL."

The fervent hope which the dying young poet thus expressed, is almost exalted to prophecy.

Nicoll left Leeds, accompanied by his wife, his mother, and his mother-in-law, to proceed by the steamer from Hull to Leith. It is an interesting fact, that, on that morning when he was seated in the railway carriage, to proceed from Leeds to Selby, on his homeward journey, pale, worn, and exhausted, but with the remains of a handsome and prepossessing countenance, he was met for the first and last time by EBENEZER ELLIOTT, who had warmly and generously appreciated his dawning genius, and foretold his future eminence. Mr. Elliott was, at this time, coming to Leeds to deliver a Lecture on Poetry, at the request of some Young Men's Association of the place, and was quite unprepared to see the spectre of the young Scottish poet, who had returned his admiration with tenfold fervour. The only poetry we have ever heard Nicoll recite and dwell upon, was Elliott's. Mr. Elliott was naturally much more affected by this hasty passing interview, this exchange of looks between the Dead and the Living, than was poor Nicoll, already overcome with the pain and languor attending his removal.

He arrived in Leith towards the end of October, and came at once to Mr. Johnstone's house at Laverock Bank, the family being then in Edinburgh. He was immediately visited by Dr. Andrew Combe, in whose skill his friends placed the utmost reliance, and even considerable hope. The Doctor kindly and generously continued his gratuitous visits from time to time; and his nephew Dr. Cox, became Nicoll's regular medical attendant. If attentive neighbours, skilful physicians, kind friends, and the most tender and devoted care of his own family, could have saved him, poor Nicoll would have been restored. Their affection, at least, smoothed his way to an early grave. For some weeks he seemed to rally; and the most threatening symptoms of his disease were temporarily checked. If the winter could only be got through, it was now fondly hoped that he might still struggle on; and in this hope his mother returned to the place from which she could ill be spared, to her family and her little traffic,—and his sister—"*The only sister*" of his poetry—and his brother speedily came to see him.

There was one friend to whom it was imagined that he wished, at this time, to intrust his MS. poems, and the care of that reputation so dear even to the dying poet, but the subject was sedulously avoided in the dread of causing excitement; for, unlike ordinary cases of consumption, Nicoll's case was attended by considerable nervous irritability. In the meanwhile, Mr. Tait had informed Sir William Molesworth of the condition of the editor of *The Leeds Times*, of his destitution, and the very faint hope that was entertained of his recovery. Sir William at once sent him an order for fifty

pounds, accompanied by a letter, remarkable for delicacy and kindness.

Nicoll did not long outlive the receipt of this timely supply, which he received in the same spirit in which it was sent. Early in December the worst symptoms of his disorder returned in an aggravated form; and his medical advisers, who had never been sanguine, gave up all hope. His parents were immediately written to; for up to this time, his father, a hard-working man, well advanced in years, had not been able to visit him. Instantly on receipt of the letter, and at nightfall on a December day, they left their cottage at Tulliebeltane, and, walking all night, reached Laverock Bank, a distance of fifty miles, on the afternoon of the following day, and but a few hours before their early-called and gifted son, in whom they must have placed so much of mingled pride and hope, breathed his last breath. It is the poor only—it is those who are called upon to suffer and to sacrifice for each other, who have the high privilege of knowing to the full extent how divine a thing is family affection.

Robert Nicoll died in his twenty-fourth year, sincerely lamented by those who knew him best. His remains were followed to the Church-yard of North Leith by a numerous and respectable assemblage, consisting chiefly of gentlemen connected with the press in Edinburgh. Those editors of liberal newspapers, in Scotland and England, to whom Nicoll's character and talents were known, bore warm testimony to his abilities, and his labours in the cause of Reform. Nor did his memory lack the tribute, dear to the bard, of contemporary verse.

In stature, Nicoll was above the middle height; though a slight stoop made him appear less tall than he really was. His person, though, at the age of twenty-three, not robust, gave no indication of constitutional delicacy. His features were all good; and the habitual expression of his countenance was pleasing; generally thoughtful, but readily kindling and brightening into the highest glee, accompanied by a merry laugh. The eyes to which he playfully alludes in one of the above letters, were of that intense, deep blue which, to a casual observer, often looks like black; and were quiet, animated, or glowing, according to the varying mood of the moment. He had the warm-coloured, dark-brown hair, and sanguine complexion, which is found with such eyes. His manners and habits were in no wise peculiar,—simple, quiet, unpretending, and manly. He would probably have been called careless in his dress; though not so much so as to excite notice. He was liable to little fits of absence or embarrassment; but this was probably owing to his newness to society; for no one noted more keenly, or apprehended more quickly, whatever passed in any conversation that interested him; or, in other words, had his wits more acutely about him. He was passionately fond of the simple music—the song and ballad music,—which he understood, and had first heard around "*Our auld hearthstane.*" In this style he liked to hear his wife chant such ballads as the *Flowers of the Forest;* and, alone by his own fireside, to pour forth his overbrimming emotions in musical strains certainly more fervid and energetic than graceful or scientific. There is an internal, a *mute* music, in which Nicoll, like Burns and Scott, and the other timber-toned or rough-voiced bards, must have

had power: yet, Nicoll's actual musical accomplishments did not rise greatly above those of the Ettrick Shepherd, whose very popular singing possessed in fire what it sadly wanted in grace.

And now the last duty to ROBERT NICOLL is fulfilled to the best of the present means of those who hailed the bright promise of his youth, and who still cherish the memory of his worth and his talents, when we shall have mentioned to the few persons familiar with his former volume, that all the pieces which now appear for the first time, (fifty-two in number,) are carefully printed from copies taken from his pencil-writing, and examined and compared with the originals by his brother, who copied them, and by Mr. Johnstone, who was quite familiar with his hand-writing. They are each marked with an asterisk in the Table of Contents to the present volume.

This imperfect sketch of Nicoll's short life may be aptly concluded by the testimony borne to his genius by Ebenezer Elliott. If different in degree, as one star differs from another in glory, they, as men and poets, belonged to the same system. It was said of Nicoll by the Corn-Law Rhymer, that "Burns at his age had done nothing like him;" and though he might neither have had the transcendent genius of a Burns to animate, and undoubtedly not the fiery passions of Burns to struggle with and control, the simple fact as regards their respective written poetry, at the age of twenty-three, is undeniable. Of Nicoll, his generous admirer of Sheffield farther says—"Unstained and pure, at the age of twenty-three, died Scotland's second Burns; happy in this, that without having been a 'blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious,' he chose, like PAUL, the right

path; and when the Terrible Angel said to his youth, 'Where is the *wise?*—where is the *scribe?*—where is the *disputer?*—Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?—He could and did answer, '*By the grace of God, I am what I am.*' . . . . Robert Nicoll is another victim added to the hundreds of thousands who 'are not dead, but gone before' to bear true witness against the merciless."*

* Defence of Modern Poetry.

ERRATA.

Page 48, line 3, for "gowden" read *raven.*
Page 98, lines 14 and 15, for "world's" read *warld's.*
Page 110, lines 9, 17, 25, &c., for "We'll make the world better yet" read *We'll mak' the warld better yet.*

PART I.

POEMS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, AND OF THE CONDITION AND FEELINGS, OF THE SCOTTISH PEASANTRY.

THE HA' BIBLE.

CHIEF of the Household Gods
  Which hallow Scotland's lowly cottage-homes!
While looking on thy signs
  That speak, though dumb, deep thought upon me comes;
With glad yet solemn dreams my heart is stirr'd,
Like childhood's when it hears the carol of a bird!

The Mountains old and hoar,
  The chainless Winds, the Streams so pure and free,
The GOD-enamel'd Flowers,
  The waving Forest, the eternal Sea,
The Eagle floating o'er the Mountain's brow,—
Are Teachers all; but O! they are not such as Thou!

O! I could worship thee!
Thou art a gift a GOD of Love might give;
For Love and Hope and Joy
In thy Almighty-written pages live!—
The Slave who reads shall never crouch again;
For, mind-inspired by thee, he bursts his feeble chain!

GOD! unto Thee I kneel,
And thank Thee! Thou unto my native land—
Yea to the outspread Earth—
Hast stretch'd in love Thy Everlasting hand,
And Thou hast given Earth, and Sea, and Air—
Yea all that heart can ask of Good, and Pure, and Fair!

And, Father, Thou hast spread
Before Men's eyes this Charter of the Free,
That all Thy Book might read,
And Justice love, and Truth and Liberty.
The Gift was unto Men—the Giver God!
Thou Slave! it stamps thee Man—go spurn thy weary load!

Thou doubly-precious Book!
Unto thy light what doth not Scotland owe?—
Thou teachest Age to die,
And Youth in Truth unsullied up to grow!
In lowly homes a Comforter art thou—
A Sunbeam sent from GOD—an Everlasting bow!

O'er thy broad, ample page
How many dim and aged eyes have pored?

How many hearts o'er thee
In silence deep and holy have adored?
How many Mothers, by their Infants' bed,
Thy Holy, Blessed, Pure, Child-loving words have read!

And o'er thee soft young hands
Have oft in truthful plighted Love been join'd;
And thou to wedded hearts
Hast been a bond—an altar of the mind!—
Above all kingly power or kingly law
May Scotland reverence aye—THE BIBLE OF THE HA'!

THE TOUN WHERE I WAS BORN.

THE loch where first the stream doth rise
Is bonniest to my e'e;
An' yon auld-warld hame o' youth
Is dearest aye to me.
My heart wi' Joy may up be heez'd,
Or down wi' Sorrow worn:
But, O! it never can forget
The toun where I was born!

The lowly hames beside the burn,
Where happy hearts were growin',
The peasant huts where, purely bright,
The light o' love was flowin',

The wee bit glebes, where honest men
Were toilin' e'en an' morn,
Are a' before me, when I mind
The toun where I was born.

O ! there were bonnie faces there,
An' hearts baith hie an' warm,
That neebors loved, an' strain'd fu' sair
To keep a friend frae harm.
Nae wealth had they ; but something still
They spared when ane forlorn,
The puir auld beggar bodie, ca'd
The toun where I was born.

The gray auld man was honour'd there,
The matron's words were cherished ;
An' honesty in youthfu' hearts
By Age's words was nourish'd.
An' though e'en there we coudna get
The rose without the thorn,
It was a happy, happy place,
The toun where I was born !

Yon heather-theekit hames were blithe,
When winter nights were lang,
Wi' spinnin'-wheels, an' jokin' lads,
An' ilka lassie's sang.
At Handsel-Monday we had mirth,
An' when the hairst was shorn
The Maidens cam',—'twas cheerfu' aye,
The toun where I was born.

I maist could greet, I am sae wae—
The very wa's are gane—
The autumn-shilfa sits an' chirps
Upon ilk cauld hearthstane;
Ae auld aik-tree, or maybe twa,
Amang the wavin' corn,
Is a' the mark that Time has left
O' the toun where I was born.

YOUTH'S DREAMS.

A PLEASANT thing it is to mind
O' youthfu' thoughts an' things,—
To pu' the fruit that on the tree
Of Memory ripely hings,—
To live again the happiest hours
Of happy days gane by,—
To dream again as I ha'e dreamed
When I was herdin' kye!

Thae days I thought that far awa',
Where hill an' sky seem met,
The bounds o' this maist glorious earth
On mountain-taps were set,—
That sun an' moon, an' blinkin' stars
Shone down frae Heaven high
To light earth's garden: sae I dream'd
When I was herdin' kye!

I thought the little burnies ran,
An' sang the while to me!
To glad me, flowers cam' on the earth
And leaves upon the tree,—
An' heather on the muirland grew,
An' tarns in glens did lie:
Of beauteous things like these I dream'd
When I was herdin' kye!

Sae weel I lo'ed a' things of earth!—
The trees—the buds—the flowers—
The sun—the moon—the lochs an' glens—
The spring's an' summer's hours!
A wither'd woodland twig would bring
The tears into my eye:—
Laugh on! but there are souls of love
In laddies herdin' kye!

O! weel I mind how I would muse,
An' think, had I the power,
How happy, happy I would make
Ilk heart the warld o'er!
The gift, unendin' happiness—
The joyful giver I!—
So pure an' holy were my dreams
When I was herdin' kye!

A silver stream o' purest love
Ran through my bosom then;
It yearn'd to bless all human things—
To love all living men!

Yet scornfully the thoughtless fool
Would pass the laddie by:
But, O! I bless the happy time
When I was herdin' kye!

ORDÉ BRAES.

THERE's nae hame like the hame o' youth—
Nae ither spot sae fair:
Nae ither faces look sae kind
As the smilin' faces there.
An' I ha'e sat by monie streams—
Ha'e travell'd monie ways;
But the fairest spot on the earth to me
Is on bonnie Ordé Braes.

An ell-lang wee thing there I ran
Wi' the ither neebor bairns,
To pu' the hazel's shinin' nuts,
An' to wander 'mang the ferns;
An' to feast on the bramble-berries brown,
An' gather the glossy slaes
By the burnie's side; an' aye sinsyne
I ha'e lov'd sweet Ordé Braes.

The memories o' my father's hame,
An' its kindly dwellers a',
O' the friends I lov'd wi' a young heart's love,
Ere Care that heart cou'd thraw,
Are twined wi' the stanes o' the silver burn,
An' its fairy creeks an' bays,
That onward sang 'neath the gowden broom
Upon bonnie Ordé Braes.

Aince in a day there were happy hames
By the bonnie Ordé's side :—
Nane ken how meikle peace an' love
In a straw-roof'd cot can bide.
But thae hames are gane, an' the hand o' Time
The roofless wa's doth raze :—
Laneness an' Sweetness hand in hand
Gang o'er the Ordé Braes.

O ! an' the sun were shinin' now,
An' O ! an' I were there,
Wi' twa three friends o' auld langsyne
My wanderin' joy to share !
For, though on the hearth o' my bairnhood's hame
The flock o' the hills doth graze,
Some kind hearts live to love me yet
Upon bonnie Ordé Braes.

THE PLACE THAT I LOVE BEST.

WHERE the purple heather blooms
  Among the rocks sae gray—
Where the moor-cock's whirring flight
  Is heard at break of day—
Where Scotland's bagpipes ring
  Alang the mountain's breast—
Where laverocks lilting sing,
  Is the place that I love best!

Where the lanely shepherd tends
  His bleating hill-side flock—
Where the raven bigs its nest
  In the crevice of the rock—
Where a guardian beacon tower
  Seems ilk rugged mountain's crest,
To watch aboon auld Scotland's glens,
  Is the place that I love best!

Where the shepherd's reeking cot
  Peeps from the broomy glen—
Where the aik-tree throws it leaves
  O'er the lowly but and ben—
Where the stanch auld-warld honesty
  Is in the puir man's breast,
And truth a guest within his hame,
  Is the place that I love best!

Where the gray-haired peasant tells
The deeds his sires have done,
Of martyrs slain on Scotland's muirs,
Of battles lost and won,—
Wherever prayer and praise arise
Ere toil-worn men can rest,
From each humble cottage fane,
Is the place that I love best!

Where my ain auld mither dwells,
And longs ilk day for me,—
While my father strokes his reverend head,
Whilk gray eneuch maun be,—
Where the hearts in kirk-yards rest
That were mine when youth was blest
As we rowed amang the gowans,
Is the place that I love best!

Where the plover frae the sky
Can send its wailing song,
Sweet mingled wi' the burnie's gush,
That saftly steals along—
Where heaven taught to ROBERT BURNS
Its hymns in language drest—
The land of Doon—its banks and braes—
Is the place that I love best!

Where the straths are fair and green,
And the forests waving deep—
Where the hill-top seeks the clouds—
Where the caller tempests sweep—

Where thoughts of freedom come
To me a welcome guest—
Where the free of soul were nursed,
Is the place that I love best!

THE FOLK O' OCHTERGAEN.*

HAPPY, happy be their dwallin's,
By the burn an' in the glen—
Cheerie lasses, cantie callans,
Are they a' in Ochtergaen.

Happy was my youth amang them—
Rantin' was my boyhood's hour;
A' the winsome ways about them,
Now, when gane, I number o'er.
Chorus—Happy, happy be their dwallin's, &c.

Weel I mind ilk wood an' burnie,
Couthie hame an' muirland fauld,—
Ilka sonsie, cheerfu' mither,
An' ilk father douce an' auld!
Chorus—Happy, happy be their dwallin's, &c.

* Ochtergaen, so provincially named, is Auchtergaven, a village midway between Perth and Dunkeld; and the nearest kirk-town to Nicoll's birth-place.

Weel I mind the ploys an' jokin's
Lads and lasses used to ha'e—
Moonlight trysts an' Sabbath wanders
O'er the haughs an' on the brae.
Chorus—Happy, happy be their dwallin's, &c.

Truer lads an' bonnier lasses
Never danced beneath the moon;—
Love an' Friendship dwelt amang them,
An' their daffin' ne'er was done.
Chorus—Happy, happy be their dwallin's, &c.

I ha'e left them now for ever;
But, to greet, would bairnly be:
Better sing, an' wish kind Heaven
Frae a' dool may keep them free.
Chorus—Happy, happy be their dwallin's, &c.

Where'er the path o' life may lead me,
Ae thing sure—I winna mane
If I meet wi' hands an' hearts
Like those o' cantie Ochtergaen.
Chorus—Happy, happy be their dwallin's,
By the burn an' in the glen—
Cheerie lasses, cantie callans,
Are they a' in Ochtergaen.

THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

I WINNA sing o' bluidy deeds an' waefu' war's alarms;
For glancin' swords an' prancin' steeds, for me possess nae charms;
But I will sing o' happiness which fireside bosoms feel,
While listenin' to the birrin' soun' o' Scotland's Spinnin'-wheel.

The Spinnin'-wheel! the Spinnin'-wheel! the very name is dear;
It minds me o' the winter nichts, the blithest o' the year;
O' cozie hours in hamely ha's, while frozen was the wiel
In ilka burn,—while lasses sang by Scotland's Spinnin'-wheel.

It minds me o' the happy time, when, in our boyish glee,
At barley-bracks, we laughin' chased ilk kimmer we could see,
Or danced, while loud the bagpipes rang, the Highland foursum reel:—
There's naething dowie brought to mind by Scotland's Spinnin'-wheel.

The auld wife by the ingle sits, an' draws her cannie thread;
It hauds her baith in milk an' meal, an' a' thing she can need:

An' gleesome scenes o' early days upo' her spirit steal,
Brought back to warm her wither'd heart by Scotland's
Spinnin'-wheel!

O! there is gladsome happiness, while round the fire
are set
The younkers,—when ahint the backs a happy pair are
met,
Wha wi' a silent kiss o' love their blessed paction seal,
While sittin' in their truth beside auld Scotland's Spin-
nin'-wheel!

O! weel I lo'e the blackbird's sang in spring-time o' the
year;
O! weel I lo'e the cushat's croon, in merry May to hear;
But o' the sounds o' love and joy, there 's nane I lo'e sae
weel—
There's nane sae pleasant as the birr o' Scotland's Spin-
nin'-wheel.

OUR AULD HEARTHSTANE.

WHERE ance the cosie fire was bien,
The winter rain-drap owrie fa's;
My father's floor wi' grass is green,
And roofless are the crumblin' wa's.
Auld thochts, auld times, upo' my heart
Are backward rowin' ane by ane:

We'll bow our houghs and hae a crack
About them on our auld hearthstane!

Our laigh cot-house I mind fu' weel:
On ae side mither spinning sat,
Droning auld sonnets to her wheel,—
And purring by her side the cat.
Anent was sair-toil'd father's chair,
Wha tauld us stories, sad and lane,
O' puir folk's waes, until we wished
Them a' beside our cosh hearthstane

And when the supper-time was o'er,
The BEUK was tane as it should be,
And heaven had its trysted hour
Aneath that sooty auld roof-tree:
Syne ilka wean was sung to sleep
Wi' sangs o' deeds and ages gane;
And rest was there until the sun
Cam' blinkin' on our auld hearthstane.

Auld stane, had ye a heart to feel,
Ye wad been blithe as ony kitten,
To hear o' ilka sang and reel,
And prank made up while round ye sittin'.
How days o' feastin' cam' wi' speed,
When dubs were hard as ony bane,
How Pace, and Yule, and Halloween
Were keepit round our auld hearthstane.

When winter nights grew white and lang,
The lads and lasses cam wi' spinning,
And mony a joke and mony a sang
Gaed round while wheels were busy rinning.
And syne whan ten cam' round about,
Ilk lassie's joe her wheel has ta'en,
And courting o'er the rigs they gang,
And leave us and our auld hearthstane!

And meikle mair I could unfauld,
How yearly we gat rantin' kirns;
And how the minister himsel'
Cam' duly carritchin' the bairns:
Vow, sic a face! I tremble yet!
Gosh guide's! it was an awfu' ane;
It gart our hearts come to our mouths,
While cowrin' round our auld hearthstane!

Weel, weel, the wheels are broken now,
The lads and lasses auld or dead,
The green grass o'er their graves doth grow,
Or gray hairs theek their aged head.
My parents baith are far awa',
My brithers fechtin', toilin' men,
It warms my heart unto them a',
The sight o' this our auld hearthstane!

When I forget this wee auld house,
When I forget what here was taught,

My head will be o' little use,
My heart be rotten, worse than naught.
Sin' birds could sing upo' thae wa's,
I've been in chaumers mony ane;
But ne'er saw I a hearth like this,
No, naething like our auld hearthstane.

Hearthstane! though wae, I needna greet,
What gude on earth wad whingeing do?
The earth has fouth o' trusty hearts,
Let him wha doubts it speir at you.
Ae wish hae I—that brither man,
The warld o'er, were, bluid and bane,
Sic truthfu', honest, trusty chields,
As ance sat round our auld hearthstane.

WE'LL A' GO PU' THE HEATHER.

We'll a' go pu' the heather—
Our byres are a' to theek:
Unless the peat-stack get a hap,
We'll a' be smoored wi' reek.
Wi' rantin' sang, awa we'll gang,
"While summer skies are blue;"
To fend against the Winter cauld
The heather we will pu'.

I like to pu' the heather,
We're aye sae mirthfu' where
The sunshine creeps atour the crags,
Like ravelled golden hair.
Where on the hill tap we can stand,
Wi' joyfu' heart I trow,
And mark ilk grassy bank and holm,
As we the heather pu'.

I like to pu' the heather—
Where harmless lambkins run,
Or lay them down beside the burn,
Like gowans in the sun;
Where ilka foot can tread upon
The heath-flower wat wi' dew,
When comes the starnie ower the hill,
While we the heather pu'.

I like to pu' the heather,
For ane can gang awa,
But no before a glint o' love
On some anes e'e doth fa'.
Sweet words we dare to whisper there,
"My hinny and my doo,"
Till maistly we wi' joy could greet
As we the heather pu'.

We'll a' go pu' the heather—
For at yon mountain fit

There stands a broom bush by a burn,
Where twa young folk can sit:
He meets me there at morning's rise,
My beautiful and true.
My father's said the word—the morn
The heather we will pu'.

MY HAME.

O! I ha'e loved the heather hills,
Where summer breezes blaw;
An' I ha'e loved the glades that gang
Through yonder greenwood-shaw!
But now the spot maist dear to me
Is where the moon doth beam
Down through the sleepin' leaves, to watch
My ain wee cantie hame.

My cantie hame! its roof o' straw,
Aneath yon thorn I see—
Yon cosie bush that couthie keeps
My wife an' bairnies three.
There's green grass round my cottage sma',
An' by it rins a stream,
Whilk ever sings a bonnie sang
To glad my cantie hame.

When delvin' in the sheugh at e'en,
Its curlin' reek I see;
I ken the precious things at hame
Are thinkin' upon me.
I ken my restin' chair is set,
Where comes the warmest gleam—
I ken there's langin' hearts in thee,
My ain wee cantie hame.

O! can I do but love it weel,
When a' thing's lovesome there?
My cheerfu' wife—my laughin' weans—
The morn an' e'enin' prayer.
The Sabbath's wander in the woods,
An' by the saut-sea faem—
The warst o' hearts might learn to love,
My ain wee cantie hame.

The blessin's o' a hame-blessed heart—
Be warm upon it a'—
On wife an' bairns may love an' peace
Like sunbeams joyous fa'!
Blithe thoughts are rinnin' through my heart,
O! thoughts I canna name—
Sae glad are they—while thinkin' o'
My ain wee cantie hame.

MY GRANDFATHER.*

HALE be thy honest trusty heart,
And hale thy beld and snawy pow,
The hand of eld ne'er furrowed o'er
A baulder or a manlier brow.
The laddie wha was ance thy pet,
Has been in places far awa',
But he thy marrow hasna met
Amang the great nor yet the sma'.

Ance proud eneuch was I to sit
Beside thee in the muirland kirk,
A ruling elder—ane o' weight,
Nae wonder though your oe did smirk:
And braw eneuch was I to find
My head the preacher's hand upon,
While by the kirkyard stile he cracked
Of holy things wi' Elder John!

And syne as hame alang the muir
I prattling by your side did rin,
Ye mind how ye rebuked thae thochts—
And ca'd them vanity and sin.

* This patriarch of Auchtergaven, the maternal grandfather of Nicoll, still survives, at the venerable age of eighty-seven, in the full possession of his mental faculties, and of remarkable bodily strength and activity. He was a respectable farmer of the Old School, but has long been retired. He is, probably, the very last wearer of the broad, blue Lowland bonnet. With "Elder John"—or Mr. John Fennick—his grandson, Robert, was a very great favourite. To those who read the above poem it is superfluous to say that the affection was mutual and fervent.

But pennies frae your auld breek pouch
Wi' dauds o' counsel ye would gie,
The last war gude—but aye the first
I liket best, I winna lee!

Thy daily fireside worship dwalls
Within this inmost soul of mine:
Thy earnest prayer—sae prophet-like—
For a' on earth I wadna' tyne.
And you and granny sang the Psalms
In holy rapt sincerity;—
My granny!—dinna greet, auld man—
She's looking down on you and me.

Can I forget how lang and weel
The carritches ye made me read?
Or yet the apples—rosie anes—
I gat to gar me mend my speed?
Can I forget affection's words,
That frae your lips like pearls ran?
Can I forget the heart that prayed
To see me aye an honest man?

And mind ye how we gat us beuks,
And read wi' meikle care and skill,
Until ye thocht this head wad wag
The poopit's haly place intil?
For mony an idle whim of mine
Wad my auld father journeys gang;
His auld heart danced when I did right,
And sair it grieved when I did wrang.

But mair than a'—frae beuks sae auld—
Frae mony treasured earnest page,
Thou traced for me the march of Truth,
The path of Right from age to age:
A peasant, auld, and puir, and deaf,
Bequeathed this legacy to me,
I was his bairn—he filled my soul
With love for Liberty!

Be blessings on thy reverend head,
I dinna need for thee to pray;
The path is narrow, but nae een
E'er saw thee from it stray.
God bears his ancient servants up—
He's borne thee since thy life began—
I'm noble by descent:—thy grave
Will hold an honest man.

OUR AULD GUDEMAN.

He was a carle in his day,
And siccar bargains he could mak,
When o'er a bicker he was set,
And deep in a twa-handed crack.
He fought horse-coupers at the tryst,
The smith and miller aft did ban;
For, whether be it at wark or play,
The gree was wi' our auld gudeman!

At kirk and preachin's duly he
The sermons sleepit—drank his gill—
He cured disease in man and beast—
And had o' Brown and Erskine skill.
The trysts and markets kent him weel,—
In quarrel, bargain, cog or can,
He took and paid an equal share
Wi' friend and faes—our auld gudeman.

Three wives he had, and bairns sax,
And, 'tween the scripture and the taws,
He gart them a' behave and work,
And mak nae mony hums and haws.
Now wi' a staff, about the dykes,
He stoiters, auld, and beld, and wan;
And what he's been he'll ever be—
A ranting, dainty, auld gudeman!

JANET DUNBAR.

A sonsy auld carline is Janet Dunbar—
A donsy auld carline is Janet Dunbar;
For a gash skilly body, weel kent near and far,
Through the hale kintra side, cantie Janet Dunbar.

Folk speer her advice, baith the greatest and least,
For she cures a' diseases o' man and o' beast;
She has words that will keep awa' witches and deils—
She has syrups in bottles, and herbs in auld creels;

To caulds and rheumatics she proves sic a fae,
They canna get rest in the parish a day.
In this queer kind o' warld there 's mony a waur
Than our cheery auld carline, gash Janet Dunbar!
A sonsy, &c.

Her hame is a howf to the bairnies at school,
And she dauts them and hauds them fu' couthie and weel,
Till in her auld lug a' their sorrows they tell—
For she'll scauld for their sakes e'en the Dominie's sell.
But Janet's high time is when night settles doun,
And a' the auld wives gather in through the town;
To tell what they are na, and what ithers are,
Is meat, drink, and claithing to Janet Dunbar!
A sonsy, &c.

And Janet's auld house has a but and a ben,
Where twa folk can meet and let naebody ken;
For Janet thinks true love nane e'er should restrain,
Having had, thretty years syne, a lad o' her ain;
And then, when the whispering and courting is done,
For some lee-like story is Janet in tune,
About some bluidy doings in some Highland scaur,—
You're a queer ane!—'deed are you, now, Janet Dunbar!
A sonsy, &c.

But when some o' her kimmers hae kirsened a wean,
Then Janet, sae braid, in her glory is seen:
She winks to the neebours, and jokes the gudeman,
Till his face grows sae red that he maistly could ban;

Syne she turns to the mither, and taks the wean's loof,
And tells that he'll neither be laggard nor coof!
You're an auld happy body—sae, bright be your star,
And lang may you stump about, Janet Dunbar!

A sonsie auld carline is Janet Dunbar—
A donsy auld carline is Janet Dunbar;
For a gash skilly body, weel kent near and far,
Through the hale kintra side, cantie Janet Dunbar.

JANET MACBEAN.

JANET MACBEAN a public keeps,
An' a merry auld wife is she;
An' she sells her ale wi' a jaunty air,
That would please your heart to see.
Her drink 's o' the best—she's hearty aye,
An' her house is cosh an' clean,—
There's no an auld wife in the public line
Can match wi' Janet Macbean.

She has aye a curtsy for the laird
When he comes to drink his can,
An' a laugh for the farmer an' his wife,
An' a joke for the farmer's man.
She toddles but, and she toddles ben,
Like ony wee bit queen—
There's no an auld wife in the public line
Can match wi' Janet Macbean.

The beggar wives gang a' to her,
An' she sairs them wi' bread an' cheese;—
Her bread in bannocks, an' cheese in whangs,
Wi' a blithe gude will she gi'es.
Vow, the kintra-side will miss her sair
When she's laid aneath the green,—
There 's no an auld wife in the public line
Can match wi' Janet Macbean.

Among ale-house wives she rules the roast;
For upo' the Sabbath days
She puts on her weel-hain'd tartan plaid
An' the rest o' her Sabbath claes;
An' she sits, nae less! in the minister's seat:
Ilk psalm she lilts, I ween,—
There 's no an auld wife in the public line
Can match wi' Janet Macbean.

MINISTER TAM.

A WEE raggit laddie he cam' to our toun,
Wi' his hair for a bannet—his taes through his shoon:
An' aye when we gart him rise up in the morn,
The ne'er-do-weel herdit the kye 'mang the corn:
We sent him to gather the sheep on the hill,—
No for wark, but to keep him frae mischief an' ill;—
But he huntit the ewes, an' he rade on the ram!
Sic a hellicat deevil was Minister Tam!

My auld Auntie sent him for sugar an' tea,—
She kent na, douce woman! how toothsome was he:—
As hamewith he cam' wi't he paikit a bairn,
An' harried a nest doun amang the lang fern;
Then, while he was restin' within the green shaw,
My auld Auntie's sugar he lickit it a';—
Syne a drubbin' to miss, he sair sickness did sham:
Sic a slee tricksy shangie was Minister Tam!

But a Carritch he took, when his ain deevil bade,—
An' wi' learnin' the laddie had maistly gaen mad;
Nae apples he pu'ed now, nae bee-bikes he smored,
The bonnie wee trouties gat rest in the ford,—
Wi' the lasses at e'enin' nae mair he would fight—
He was learnin' and spellin' frae mornin' to night:
He grow mim as a puddock an' quiet as a lamb,—
Gudesakes! sic a change was on Minister Tam?

His breeks they were torn an' his coat it was bare;
But he gaed to the school, an' he took to the lear:
He fought wi' a masterfu' heart up the brae,
Till to see him aye toilin' I maistly was wae:
But his wark now is endit,—our Tammie has grown
To a kirk wi' a steeple—a black silken gown,—
Sic a change frae our laddie wha barefooted cam',—
Wi' his wig white wi' pouther, is Minister Tam!

THE DOMINIE.

Cam' ye e'er by our toun?
  Danced ye e'er upon its green?
The smeeky hames o' our toun
  Sae blithesome, ha'e ye ever seen?
There's rantin' chields in our toun—
  The wabster, smith, an' monie mae;
But 'mang the lads o' our toun
  The foremost is the Dominie!

'Bout a' auld-farrant things he kens—
  The Greeks an' bluidy Romans too;
An' ithers wi' auld-warld names
  That sairly crook a body's mou'.
He kens the places far awa'
  Where black folk dwall ayont the sea;
An' how an' why the starnies shine
  Is weel kent to the Dominie!

Wi' meikle words an' wisdom nods
  The fleggit fearfu' bairns he rules;
An' he can tell the Hebrew names
  O' aumries an' three-leggit stools!
A dead man's skull wi' girnin' teeth
  Frae out the auld kirkyard has he:
For droll an' gey an' fearsome things
  There 's nane can match the Dominie.

O' beuks a warld he has read,
An' wi' his tongue can fight like mad,
Till ither folk he sometimes mak's
That they will neither bind nor haud:
And if they're dour and winna ding,
Their settlin' soon he does them gi'e
Wi' words o' queer lang-nebbit speech—
Sae learned is the Dominie!

There's yon auld soger, wha has been
Where oranges like brambles hing,—
There's ne'er a ane the clachan o'er
Can crack like him 'bout onie thing:
They say that wi' the deil he deals!—
It may be sae; but even he
Maun steek his gab when clinkin' ben
At e'enin' comes the Dominie!

An' sic a face he does put on
On Sabbath when he sings the Psalm!
The auld wives of the parochin
Are thinkin' him a gospel lamb.
At weddin's, when the lave are blithe,
Wi' auld folk doucely sitteth he
Till Minister an' Elders gang;—
But syne—up bangs the Dominie!

Frae cheek to chin—frae lug to lug—
The lasses round he kisses a',
An' loups an' dances, cracks his thoums,
Nor hamewith steers till mornin' daw;

An' whiles at e'en to our door cheek
He comes, an' sleelie winks on me,—
Yestreen, ayont the kailyard dyke,
I 'greed to wed the Dominie!

THE SMITH.

Our Burn-the-wind was stout and strang,
His stature mounted ellwands twa,
His grip was like a smiddy vice,
And he could gie a fearfu' thraw.
At hammerin' airn he was gude,
A' kinds o' tackle—pot or pan—
Or gun, or sword—be't mak or mend—
Clink, clink—our smith he was the man.

A' things o' airn kind he made
As weel as hand o' man could do;
And he could court a bonnie lass,
And drink a reaming coggie too.
Frae side to side, the clachan o'er
Ilk gudewife's bottle he had pried,
And ilka lass had touzled weel—
The smith at wooin' aye cam speed!

Be't late or soon—or auld or new—
The smith the feck o' a' things kend,
And if a story wasna right,
A story he could mak or mend!

He was a perfect knowledge-box—
An oracle to great and sma'—
And fifty law-pleas he had lost,
He was sae weel acquaint wi' law!

He naigs could shoe, and sangs could sing,
And say a grace upon a pinch;
Could lick a loon at tryst or fair—
A man was trusty every inch!
He ruled the roast—our Burn-the-wind—
Be he at home, be he a-field—
In love, or drink, or lear, or wark,
Vow, but he was a famous chield!

AULD DONALD.

Donald fought in France and Spain,
Donald mony men hath killed,
And frae the pouches o' the slain
Aft has he his spleuchan filled.
Donald was a soldier good,
Though whiles the bicker made him fa',
He meikle fought, and plundered mair,
Where might was right, and force was law!

Donald's pow grew white as lint,
Donald langer wou'dna do—
Hame he cam wi' coppers six
Ilk day, to melt in mountain-dew.

Donald tells his fearfu' tales,
Donald drinks like ony sow,
And monie battles does he fecht,
Wi' bourtree bushes, when he's fou.

Donald, a' the laddies' heads
Has filled wi' thoughts o' sword and gun;
He gars them fecht like sparrow-cocks,
And thinks it nocht but famous fun.
Now dinna crook your saintly mou'
At Donald's sin and Donald's shame:
Ye ken, by Donald and his like
We've gotten—such a glorious name!

BONNIE BESSIE LEE.

SONG.

Bonnie Bessie Lee had a face fu' o' smiles,
And mirth round her ripe lip was aye dancing slee;
And light was the footfa', and winsome the wiles,
O' the flower o' the parochin—our ain Bessie Lee!

Wi' the bairns she would rin, and the school laddies paik,
And o'er the broomy braes like a fairy would flee,
Till auld hearts grew young again wi' love for her sake:—
There was life in the blithe blink o' Bonnie Bessie Lee!

She grat wi' the waefu', and laughed wi' the glad,
  And light as the wind 'mang the dancers was she;
And a tongue that could jeer, too, the little limmer had,
  Whilk keepit aye her ain side for Bonnie Bessie Lee!

And she whiles had a sweetheart, and sometimes had twa—
  A limmer o' a lassie!—but, atween you and me,
Her warm wee bit heartie she ne'er threw awa',
  Though mony a ane had sought it frae Bonnie Bessie
    Lee!

But ten years had gane since I gazed on her last,—
  For ten years had parted my auld hame and me;
And I said to mysel' as her mither's door I pass'd,
  "Will I ever get anither kiss frae Bonnie Bessie Lee?"

But Time changes a' thing—the ill-natured loon!
  Were it ever sae rightly he'll no let it be;
But I rubbit at my een, and I thought I would swoon,
  How the carle had come roun' about our ain Bessie Lee!

The wee laughing lassie was a gudewife growing auld—
  Twa weans at her apron and ane on her knee;
She was douce, too, and wiselike—and wisdom's sae
    cauld:——
  I would rather ha'e the ither ane than this Bessie Lee!

FIDDLER JOHNNY.

SONG.

ALANG by yon burn-side
I saw him gang yestreen,—
His fiddle upon his back
Was row'd in claith o' green.
His wifie led her Johnny:—
O' een she had but ane;
While he, for a' his mirth,
Puir bodie! has gat nane.

He canna see a blink,
Yet doesna greet an' grane;
An' ither folk he hauds
Fu' cheerfu' but an' ben.
A cantie spring he plays—
A cantie sang he sings:
The Fiddler weel is kent,—
For mirth wi' him he brings.

Monie a merry nicht
The auld blind man has been
Wi' great folk in the ha'—
Wi' sma' folk on the green.
He's aye a welcome guest
Wherever he does gang,—
They gi'e him meat an' claes,
An' he gi'es them a sang.

The fient a hair cares he
For onie mortal bodie,—
He'll geck e'en at the Minister,
An' joke wi' laird an' lady!
The duddie plaid Pretence,
He, laughin', rives in twa,—
A fool an' knave the Fiddler
A fool and knave doth ca'!

O! leeze me on the Fiddler:
If we had monie mae
As blithe in heart as he,
We wouldna be sae wae!
An' gif, like him, the truth
To tell, we a' would 'gree,
The world where we live
Would meikle better be!

THE PROVOST.

A bare-leggit callant came out o' the north,
And set himself down in our borough,
The loon had a dour and a miserly look,
Folk said he'll no leave in a hurry.
He was twenty-first cousin to some Highland laird,
His tartan was o' the chief's colour;
But nae sort o' wark came a-jee to the Celt
If ye made him but sure o' the siller!

He was toiling and earning baith early and late,
Though lazy folk tried to deride him;
He was a' body's servant and a' body's jest—
Fient cared he, if a' body paid him.
His kilt he exchanged for a braw pair o' breeks,
The Gaelic nae langer did snivel;
He began to be likit—had Satan been rich,
To Satan he would ha'e been civil.

He gat him a carritch, and set him to spell—
The clans are but so-so at reading;
He soon was a clerk, and a clerk o' the best—
Dour devil! he a' thing came speed in!
He bowed and he becket, till by a bit desk
He had come to a safe kind o' anchor;
And ere lang our slee callant was aff to the kirk
Wi' the dochter o' Guineas the banker!

He could lie like an apple-wife—cheat like the deil,
He was surely created for rising:
Although he had died in a baronet's chair
It wadna been naething surprising.
Our Provost was old—he was dotard and blind,
And death took him aff in a hurry:
Syne Banker MacTurk, wi' his pouchfu's o' gowd,
Was exalted to rule o'er the borough.

The Provost had power, and the Provost had sense;
Great folk ga'e him places by dozens,—
He sold them his vote, and they quartered a score
Of his lang-leggit, bare Highland cousins.

He ruled a' the council—the bailies an' a'—
To the land-loupers acted like Nero;
The Provost was siccar—wha lost or wha wan,
Number ane was aye taken gude care o'.

But Death lenket ben wi' a grim angry leuk,
And the wily auld Provost was ended:
Twa opinions divided the feck o' the toun
As to whilk way his spirit had wended.
An auld doited weaver misca'd him fu sair,
And said he deserved the wae woodie:
He said that o' a Provost!—I'm sure you'll agree,
He maun been but a kae-witted bodie!

THE BAILIE.

Down the street the Bailie comes—
Faith he keeps the causey-crown,
He bans the sergeants black and blue,
The bellman gets the name o' loun.
He can speak in monie tongues,
Gude braid Scots and hieland Erse;
The king o' Bailies is our ain,
Sic men I fear are unco scarce!

At feasting-time the powers aboon
At cramming try their utmost skill;
But faith the Bailie dings them a'
At spice and wine, or whisky gill.

The honest man can sit and drink,
And never ha'e his purse to draw;
He helps to rule this sinfu' town,
And as it should—it pays for a'.

And then to see him in the kirk,
Wi' gowden chain about his neck!
He's like a king upon a throne—
I say it wi' a' meet respect.
And to the folk who fill the lafts,
Fu' monie a fearsome look he gi'es,
To see that a' are duly filled
Wi' terror of the dignities!

A pickle here—a pickle there,
Of borough siller Bailie gets,
And he would need—it's no a joke,
To fitly fill a Bailie's seat!
The Bailie likes the gude auld ways,
And yet he langs for something new;
He thinks twal corporation feasts
Within the year are unco few!

THE HOPES OF AGE.

We maun wear awa', Robbie, we needna repine,
This head lang has lain in that bosom of thine;

We are auld, we are frail, we are lanely and a',
Nae mane will we mak' though we're wearin' awa'!

Frae our auld cottar-house, it winna be lang
Ere to the cauld kirk-yard thegether we gang;
Though nae bonnie bairnie to love us ha'e we,
Yet some will be wae for my Robbie and me!

...e mair will our ingle blink when it is mirk,
...r twa auld white pows will be missed in the kirk,
...d the auld beggar bodie will thowless gang by,
And for the gudewife and our awmous will sigh!

To the hillock that wraps us aneath its green sod,
The feet o' our neebours will soon mak' a road,
And the bairnies will greet 'cause the auld folk are gane,
Who cuddled them aft till o' griefs they had nane.

When youngsters come hameward frae lands far awa',
'Bout me and my Robbie they'll speer and they'll ca',
They'll think o' the day when youth's simmer was fine,
And they'll mourn for us gane, wi' the hours o' langsyne.

We maun wear awa', Robbie—we need fearna to gae,
Did we e'er fail a friend—did we e'er wrang a fae?
Our life has been lowly, as lowly can be,
And death winna part my auld gudeman and me.

HOME THOUGHTS.

Though Scotland's hills be far awa',
And her glens, where the clear silver burnies row,
I see them, and hear her wild breezes blaw,
O'er the moors where the blue-bells and heather grow.

Oh, hame is sweet!—but thae hames o' thine
Are the kindliest far that the sun doth see;
And, though far awa' I have biggit mine,
As my mother's name they are dear to me!

I love the tale o' thy glories auld,
Which thy shepherds tell on the mountain side,
Of thy Martyrs true, and thy Warriors bauld,
Who for thee and for Freedom lived and died!

Land of my youth! though my heart doth move,
And sea-like my blood rises high at thy name,
'Boon a' thing there 's ae thing in thee I love—
The virtue and truth o' thy Poor Man's Hame.

The Poor Man's Hame! where I first did ken
That the soul alone makes the good and great—
That glitter and glare are false and vain,
And Deceit upon Glory's slave doth wait.

Thy Poor Man's Hame! wi' its roof o' strae,
A hut as lowly as lowly can be—
Through it the blast sae cauldrife does gae;
Yet, Hame o' the Lowly, I'm proud o' thee!

Scotland! to thee thy sons afar
Send blessings on thy rocks, thy flood and faem—
On mountain and muir, on glen and scaur—
But deeper blessings still on thy Poor Man's Hame!

THE BATTLE WORD.

In Scotland's cause—for Scotland's gude,
We'll blithely shed our dearest bluid,
An' stand or fa' as freeman should,
As we hae done before.
Now proudly come the foemen on,
Against auld Scotland's mountain throne;
The sun its last on them hath shone,—
Claymore!

We're freemen, an' maun ne'er be slaves—
We fight for heather-cover'd graves—
To tell yon comin' warrior-waves
That men our mothers bore;

For maidens loved—for parents dear,
Fourscore would battle were it here,
An' stand like us, nor think o' fear—
Claymore!

They break—they halt—they form again—
We well have borne the battle-strain:
The grass that clothes the reeking plain
Is wet wi' stranger gore.
Remember! for our native soil,
That a' we love at hame may smile;
Nerve ilka arm for bloody toil—
Claymore!

We've conquered! wives an' bairns a',
We've conquered! baith for grit and sma'—
For maid and matron—puir and braw—
The bluidy darg is o'er.
Our fathers' weapon and our ain,
Thou'lt be our sons' we brawly ken—
By foughten fields! by foemen slain!
Claymore!

PART II.

SONGS, CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.

THE MUIR O' GORSE AND BROOM.

I WINNA bide in your castle ha's,
  Nor yet in your lofty towers,—
My heart is sick o' your gloomy hame,
  An' sick o' your darksome bowers;
An' O! I wish I were far awa'
  Frae their grandeur an' their gloom,
Where the freeborn lintie sings its sang,
  On the muir o' gorse an' broom.

Sae weel as I like the healthfu' gale
  That blads fu' kindly there,
An' the heather brown, an' the wild blue-bell,
  That wave on the muirland bare;
An' the singing birds, an' the humming bees,
  An' the little lochs that toom
Their gushin' burns to the distant sea,
  O'er the muir o' gorse an' broom.

O! if I had a dwallin' there,
Biggit laigh by a burnie's side,
Where ae aik-tree, in the simmer-time,
Wi' its leaves that hame might hide,—
O! I wad rejoice frae day to day,
As blithe as a young bridegroom;
For dearer than palaces to me
Is the muir o' gorse an' broom!

In a lanely cot on a muirland wild,
My mither nurtured me:
O' the meek wild-flowers I playmates made,
An' my hame wi' the wandering bee:
An' O! if I were far awa'
Frae your grandeur an' your gloom,
Wi' them again, an' the bladding gale,
On the muir o' gorse an' broom!

THE BELOVED ONE.

O! the rose is like her ruby lip,
And the lily like her skin;
And her mouth like a faulded violet,
Wi' the scented breath within;
And her een are like yon bonnie flower
When the dew is in its cup;—
As the bee frae it its honey draws,
I love frae them maun sip.

O ! her voice is like yon little bird's
That sits in the cherry-tree :
For the air o' the sky and the heart o' man
It fills wi' its melodie.
Her hand is soft as the downy peach
Upon yon branch that hings ;
An' her hair its gloss sae rich has stown
Frae the bonnie blackbird's wings !

O ! her smile is like the sun that shines
Upon yon fair wa'-flower—
As the bonnie buds this plays among,
Her face that wanders o'er.
But a love-warm kiss o' her rosy mou'
Wi' naething can compare,—
Sae meikle o' bliss an' holiness
The craving heart might sair.

O ! the garden-flowers are fair an' pure—
The rose an' the lily too ;
An' the wall-flower rich in Nature's wealth—
An' the peeping violet blue :
O ! bonnie as Heaven itsel', an' pure,
Are the flowers o' ilka kind ;
But they ha'ena the womanly purity
O' my darling Jeanie's mind !

THE MAKING O' THE HAY.

Across the rigs we'll wander
  The new-mawn hay amang,
And hear the blackbird in the wood,
  And gi'e it sang for sang.
  We'll gi'e it sang for sang, we will,
For ilka heart is gay,
  As lads and lasses trip alang,
At making o' the hay!

It is sae sweetly scented,
  It seems a maiden's breath;
Aboon, the sun has wither'd it,
  But there is green beneath.
  But there is caller green beneath,
Come, lasses, foot away!
  The heart is dowie can be cauld,
At making o' the hay!

Step lightly o'er, gang saftly by,
  Mak' rig and furrow clean,
And coil it up in fragrant heaps,—
  We maun ha'e done at e'en:—
  We maun ha'e done at gloaming e'en;
And when the clouds grow gray,
  Ilk lad may kiss his bonnie lass
Amang the new-made hay!

MENIE.

Fu' ripe, ripe was her rosy lip,
And gowden was her hair;
And white, white was her swan-like neck—
Her een like starnies were!
And raven, raven was her hair,
And like the snaw her brow;
And the words that fell frae her wee saft mou'
Were happy words I trow!

And pure, pure was her maiden heart,
And ne'er a thought o' sin
Durst venture there—an angel dwelt
Its borders a' within!
And fair as was her sweet bodie,
Yet fairer was her mind;
Menie 's the queen amang the flowers—
The wale of womankind.

DOWN BY THE WOOD.

Down by the wood
When daylight is breaking,
And the first breath of dawn
The green leaves is shaking,

'Tis bliss, without limit,
Alone to be straying—
To hear the wild-wood birds,
And what they are saying!

Down by the wood
When its noon in the heaven,
And the steer to the shade
Of the hedgerow is driven,—
'Tis sweet to recline
In the beechen-tree's shadow,
And drink all the glories
Of field, forest, meadow!

Down by the wood
At the fall of the gloaming,
'Mong clear crystal dew-drops
'Tis sweet to be roaming:—
The hush of the wheat-ears—
The gushing of water—
The shiver of green leaves—
The music of nature!

MY AULD GUDEWIFE.

THERE 's nane like you—there 's nane like you:
The youngsters blithe around us now

Are bonnie a' baith grit an' sma';
But, auld gudewife, there 's nane like you.

Nae doubt they're dear to ither hearts;
But since thae bairns atween us grew,
You're mair than a' the earth to me—
There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you.
Chorus—There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you, &c.

Within my arms ye now ha'e lain
For springs an' summers forty-two:
You've cheer'd my grief an' shared my joy—
There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you.
Chorus—There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you, &c.

Ye ance were fair as ony here—
Your cheek as fresh—your een as blue;
But wither'd, wrinkled as ye are—
There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you.
Chorus—There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you, &c.

Ye mind, gudewife, when we could loup
An' dance as they are dancin' now;
I lo'ed ye then—I lo'e ye yet—
There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you.
Chorus—There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you, &c.

A meikle share o' love we've had
The warld as we've warsled through:
My auld heart dances thinking o't—
There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you.
Chorus—There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you, &c.

There come your childer an' their joes
Wi' daffin' unco tired I trow:
Cleek hame wi' me, my auld gudewife—
There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you.
Chorus—There 's nane like you—there 's nane like you:
The youngsters blithe around us now
Are bonnie a' baith grit an' sma':
But, auld gudewife, there 's nane like you.

THE COURTIN' TIME.

Our Jean likes the mornin' when milkin' the kye,
An' May thinks the noontide gangs merrily by;
But nane o' them a' are sae saft and serene
As the hours when the lads come a-courtin' at e'en.
A-courtin' at e'en—a-courtin' at e'en—
As the hours when the lads come a-courting at e'en!

The sun quietly slips o'er the tap o' the hill,
An' the plover its gloamin' sang whistles fu' shrill,
Syne dimness comes glidin' where daylight hath been,
An' the dew brings the lads who come courtin' at e'en.
Courtin' at e'en—courtin' at e'en—
An' the dew brings the lads who come courtin' at e'en!

When the men-folk are crackin' o' owsen an' land,
An' the kimmers at spinnin' are tryin' their hand,
I see at the window the face o' a frien',
An' I ken that my joe 's come a-courtin' at e'en.
A-courtin' at e'en—a-courtin' at e'en—
An' I ken that my joe 's come a-courtin' at e'en!

I never lat on, but I cannily gang
To the door to my laddie, an' a' may think lang;
An' the warm simmer gale may blaw snelly an' keen
Ere I leave the braw lad who comes courtin' at e'en.
Courtin' at e'en—courtin' at e'en—
Ere I leave the braw lad who comes courtin' at e'en!

Awa 'mang the stacks wi' my dearie I gae;
An' we dern oursel's down 'mang the fresh aiten strae—
There we cozilie crack, while thegether we lean;
An' blithe is the time o' our courtin' at e'en—
Courtin' at e'en—courtin' at e'en—
An' blithe is the time o' our courtin' at e'en!

Neist mornin' they meet me wi' flouting an' jeers,
An' about my braw wooer ilk ane o' them speers;

But for floutin' an' scornin' I carena, I ween,
Compared wi' the lad who comes courtin' at e'en.
Courtin' at e'en—courtin' at e'on—
Compared wi' the lad who comes courtin' at e'en!

THE BONNIE HIELAND HILLS.

O! the bonnie Hieland hills,
O! the bonnie Hieland hills,—
The bonnie hills o' Scotland O!
The bonnie Hieland hills.

There are lands on the earth where the vine ever blooms—
Where the air that is breathed the sweet orange perfumes;
But mair dear is the blast the lane shepherd that chills,
As it wantons alang o'er our ain Hieland hills.
Chorus—O! the bonnie Hieland hills,
O! the bonnie Hieland hills,—
The bonnie hills o' Scotland O!
The bonnie Hieland hills.

There are rich gowden lands wi' their skies ever fair;
But o' riches or beauty we make na our care;
Wherever we wander ae vision aye fills
Our hearts to the burstin'—our ain Hieland hills.

Chorus—O! the bonnie Hieland hills,
O! the bonnie Hieland hills,—
The bonnie hills o' Scotland O!
The bonnie Hieland hills.

In our lone and deep valleys fair maidens there are,
Though born in the midst o' the elements' war:
O! sweet are the damsels that sing by our rills,
As they dash to the sea frae our ain Hieland hills.

Chorus—O! the bonnie Hieland hills,
O! the bonnie Hieland hills,—
The bonnie hills o' Scotland O!
The bonnie Hieland hills.

On the moss-cover'd rock, wi' their broadswords in hand,
To fight for fair freedom their sons ever stand;
A storm-nurs'd bold spirit ilk warm bosom fills,
That guards frae a' danger our ain Hieland hills.

Chorus—O! the bonnie Hieland hills,
O! the bonnie Hieland hills,—
The bonnie hills o' Scotland O!
The bonnie Hieland hills.

THE THISTLE.

By the Thistle we'll stand while there's blood in our veins:
We carena who loses—we carena who gains;

For *our* side is ta'en ; an', while reason remains,
We'll stand by the auld Scottish Thistle.
Chorus—Put your foot to mine,
Heart and hand let us join
To stand by the auld Scottish Thistle.

May it flourish! its hame is our dear native land ;
While there 's life in ilk heart—while there 's strength in ilk hand,
Be 't by night or by day—be 't by sea or by land,
We 'll stand by the auld Scottish Thistle.

While we hallow the graves o' the free an' the brave—
While the land hath a stream, while the sea hath a wave—
While the bold are the free, while the coward's a slave—
We 'll stand by the auld Scottish Thistle.

For the love of the maiden, the praise of the free—
For the blessings that father an' mother will gi'e—
For the hames that are dear baith to thee and to me,
We 'll stand by the auld Scottish Thistle.

By Freedom ! our aith—be 't in peace or in war—
We 'll mak' Honour an' Scotland our bright guiding star;
An' till valleys lie low, where our wild mountains are,
We 'll stand by the auld Scottish Thistle.
Chorus—Put your foot to mine,
Heart and hand let us join
To stand by the auld Scottish Thistle.

THE HEATHER OF SCOTLAND.

THE heather, the heather,
The bonnie brown heather—
The heather, the heather
Of Scotland O!

'Tis thy badge an' thy token, thou gem o' the North—
'Tis wide-spread as the fame o' thy honour an' worth:
It is welcomed wherever its red blossoms blow
As the bonnie brown heather of Scotland O!
Chorus—The heather, the heather, &c.

The dark hair of our maidens it decks on our hills,
An' the place of a plume in the bonnet it fills:
On the mountain it blooms and in valleys below;
O! the bonnie brown heather of Scotland O!
Chorus—The heather, the heather, &c.

'Tis the best pledge o' friendship, o' true love, an' truth;
'Tis the plant o' our hames—of the land o' our youth.
By our door-steps an' hamesteads it sweetly doth grow;
O! the bonnie brown heather of Scotland O!
Chorus—The heather, the heather, &c.

For freedom, langsyne, when our forefathers fought—
When wi' blood frae their bold hearts our birthright
they bought—

They fell free and unconquer'd, fronting the foe
On the bonnie brown heather of Scotland O!
Chorus—The heather, the heather, &c.

The fields o' renown where our warriors have bled—
The cairns on our hills where our chieftains are laid—
Ilka scene that is dear to our hearts bright doth glow
Wi' the bonnie brown heather of Scotland O!
Chorus—The heather, the heather, &c.

Let us stand and, uncover'd, our hands let us join,
Vowing high-hearted manhood we never will tyne;
But will strive to bring honour wherever we go
To the bonnie brown heather of Scotland O!
Chorus—The heather, the heather,
The bonnie brown heather—
The heather, the heather
Of Scotland O!

THE BAGPIPES.

THE bagpipe's wild music comes o'er the braid lea,
An' the thoughts o' langsyne it is bringin' to me,
When the warrior's foot on the heather was placed—
When his heart an' his hand for the combat were braced—
When the free by the brave to the battle were led,
An' when ilka man's hand had to keep his ain head:—

Thae auld-warld fancies my heart winna tyne,
Of the bold an' the true o' the days o' langsyne.

When the bairn was born the bagpipes were brought;
The first sound in its ears was their bauld-speakin' note;
An' when forth came the Tartan in battle-array,
The proud voice o' war aye was leading the way:
An' when dead wi' his fathers the warrior was laid,
Aboon his low dwelling the coronach was play'd.
In weal, as in woe,—amid tears, amid wine,
The bagpipes aye moved the bold hearts o' langsyne.

Alang the hill-side comes the dear pibroch's sound,
And auld Scottish thoughts from my heart are unwound:
The days o' the past are around me again—
The hall of the chieftain—the field of the slain—
The men of the plaid an' the bonnet sae blue,
Who by Scotland, my country, stood leally an' true.
O! the land o' the bagpipes and thistle is mine,
Wi' its auld rousing thoughts of the days o' langsyne!

FADING AWAY.

A STARN shone out deep in the sky,
Blinkin' sae cheery cheerily:
It was seen an' loved by mony an eye—
That brightest speck in the Heavens high:
But in darkness sad the starn did die:
My sang sings dreary drearily.

A flowrie grew in yonder wood,
Bloomin' sae cheery cheerily;
An' the light o' day did round it flood,
Till brightest amang the bright it stood:
But it faded an' wither'd leaf an' bud:
My sang sings dreary drearily.

A bonnie maiden loved me true,
An' time gaed cheery cheerily;
Her lip was red an' her een were blue,
A warm leal heart she had, *I trow*;
But alake! she's dead, the maid I lo'e:
My sang sings dreary drearily.

REGRETS.

TAK' aff, tak' aff this silken garb,
An' bring to me a Hieland plaid:
Nae bed was e'er sae saft an' sweet
As ane wi' it an' heather made.
Tak' aff this gowd-encircled thing,
An' bring to me a bonnet blue,
To mind me o' the Hieland hills
That I ha'e left for ever now.

Tak', tak' awa' this gaudy flower,
An' bring to me a sprig o' heather,

Like those langsyne among the hills
Of home and youth, I aft did gather.
For a' your luscious Indian fruit
The ripe blaeberry bring to me:
To be in braes where black they hing
There's nought on earth I wadna' gi'e.

O! take away this tinsel wealth,
That wiled me frae my Hieland hame;
I cannot bear its glitter now,—
For it I've played a losing game.
O! bring me back my youthfu' heart—
The eye and hand of long ago—
Take a' I have, but place me syne
Afar where Hieland waters flow!

O! for an hour o' youth an' hope—
Ae moment o' my youthfu' years
Upon the hills of Scotland dear,
When I had neither cares nor fears.
I mauna sigh, I mauna mane—
Before my fate I laigh maun bow,—
Bring wealth—bring wine—till I forget
The time when round me heather grew!

THE HIELAND PLAID.

O! LEEZE me on the Hieland plaid,—
The tartan plaidie, tartan plaidie!
The very sight o't makes me glad—
The bonnie tartan plaidie!

It minds me o' the happy days,
When blithe I herdit on the braes,
O' love an' a' its gladsome ways:
Be blessin's on the plaidie!
Chorus—O! leeze me on the Hieland plaid, &c.

My Sandie was the triggest lad
That ever made a lassie glad;
An' O! a handsome look he had
When he put on his plaidie.
Chorus—O! leeze me on the Hieland plaid, &c.

I mind it as I mind yestreen,
When courtin' he would come at e'en:
We sat upo' the trystin' green
Beneath his tartan plaidie.
Chorus—O! leeze me on the Hieland plaid, &c.

At fairs and preachin's, far and near,
Baith Sandy an' his joe were there;

An' as we hame at night did wear,
He row'd me in his plaidie.
Chorus—O! leeze me on the Hieland plaid, &c.

For monie a year, at hame, a-field,
The plaidie was his cosie bield:
O! vow, he was a sonsie chield
When he gat on his plaidie.
Chorus—O! leeze me on the Hieland plaid, &c.

When winter nights were lang an' cauld,
Upo' the hill he watch'd the fauld,
Frae e'en to morn sae crouse an' bauld,
Weel happit in his plaidie!
Chorus—O! leeze me on the Hieland plaid, &c.

When Sandie gaed as I am gaun—
When frae our fireside he was ta'en—
They laid him low aneath the stane
Row'd in his tartan plaidie.
Chorus—O! leeze me on the Hieland plaid,—
The tartan plaidie, tartan plaidie!
The very sight o't maks me glad—
The bonnie tartan plaidie!

WHAT SHALL I DO?

I'M either gaun daft, or I'm donnert wi' drink,
My head is a' singin'—I'm deein', I think:—

Whene'er I see Mysie, I grane and I grue;
I maybe ha'e fa'en in love!—What shall I do?

That guess is the right ane, as sure as a gun;
But frae the deep sea to the de'il I ha'e run.
There are cures for a fever, but nane for me now:
To a lassie I canna speak!—What shall I do?

Will I tell her I've plenty o' maut, meal, and milk—
A stockin' o' guineas—a gown-breed o' silk—
That my auld mither's plaid is as gude as when new—
An' the hale I will gi'e her?—O! what shall I do?

It 's weel kent I ne'er had a gift o' the gab,
An' my thoughts now ha'e gane, like a sair ravell'd wab:
If I try to speak saftly, I'll look unco blue,
An' stoiter an' stammer!—O! what shall I do?

What say ye? Gae praise her saft cheek an' blue een,
An' swear that their like on the earth ne'er was seen,
An' daut her fu' kindly?—Na! I canna woo,
Sae needna be tryin'!—O! what shall I do?

Gae, gar the auld wives o' the clachan come ben—
Can nae skilly body gi'e cures for sic pain?
If I die, the fau't, Mysie, will lie upo' you—
The de'il tak' the womenkind!—What shall I do?

THE WOOING.

Though overly proud, she was bonnie an' young,
And, in spite o' her jeers an' her scornin',
I lo'ed her as weel, or mair than mysel';
An' I follow'd her e'enin' an' mornin'.
She trysted me ance, an' she trysted me twice,
But—the limmer!—she never came near me;
And, when I complain'd o't, she leuch, while she speer'd
Was I fear'd that the bogles would steer me?

I gaed to the market to meet wi' my joe,
An' to buy her back-burdens o' fairin',
My lang-hoarded shillin's an' saxpences took;
For I vow'd that I wou'dna be sparin'.
She pouch'd a' my sweeties, my apples, an' rings,
Till awa' was ilk lang-treasured shillin',
Then says I, "We'll go hame;" "Losh, Geordie, gae wa',"
Says she, "for your supper is spillin'!"

Wi' puir Geordie's fairings, sae fine, in her pouch,
She gaed an' drew up wi' anither—
The chield threw his arms about her sweet neck,
An' awa' hame they cleekit thegither.
Wi' a heart sad an' sair I follow'd the twa—
At her auld father's door saw them partin'—
Syne lifted the sneck, an' crap after my joe,
Wi' a waefu'-like look, I am certain!

I whisper'd her name, an' I clinkit me down
In the dark, on the settle, aside her,
An' clew at my head—I was sairly tongue-tied;
For I hadna the smeddum to chide her.
I now an' then mumbled a short word or twa—
A saft word or twa to my dearie;
But she gapit, an' gauntit, sae aft an' sae lang,
An' she said she o' courtin' was weary!

I raise to gae hame; but the deil, for my sins,
O'er the floor gart me stoiter an' stammer,
Till the pans made a noise, as the tinker had been
A-smashin' them a' wi' his hammer.
At the clatter, up startit the waukrife auld wife,—
Her claes she put on in a hurry;
Says she, "There 's a loun 'yont the hallan wi' Meg,
An' the tangs in his harns I will bury!"

The flytin' auld rudas cam' but wi' a bang;
An' my bosom was in a sad swither;
An' maist I would 'greed to forgotten my Meg,
If I had got quit o' her mither.
The wife an' the tangs were ahint me, I trow;
An' the window was hie,—but I jumpit;
An' up to the neck in a deep midden-hole,
Like a trout in a bucket, I plumpit!

Baith mither an' dochter glower'd out on the fun,
An' the young gilpie Maggie was laughin'

The auld ane skreigh'd out wi' a terrible yowl,
"Hey, lad! ye are row'd in a rauchan."
My face it was red, an' my heart it was sair,
While my fause love my sorrow was mockin';
And an uncanny something raise up in my throat,
Till I thought that I surely was choakin'.

I ran to the burn, an' to drown me I vow'd,
For my heart wi' my fause love was breakin';
But the banks were sae high, and the water sae deep,
That the sight o't wi' fear set me quakin'!
Says I, Why despair? Sae comfort I took:—
A sweetheart! I'll soon get anither:
Sae hamewith I toddled, an' endit it a'—
For I told my mischance to my mither!

THE LAMENT OF BENEDICK THE MARRIED MAN.

I ANCE was a wanter, as happy 's a bee:—
I meddled wi' nane, and nane meddled wi' me.
I whiles had a crack o'er a cog o' gude yill—
Whiles a bicker o' swats—whiles a heart-heezin' gill;
And I aye had a groat if I hadna a pound,—
On the earth there were nane meikle happier found:
But my auld mither died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne.

Fu' sound may she sleep!—a douce woman was she,
Wi' her wheel, an' her pipe, an' her cuppie o' tea.
My ingle she keepit as neat as a preen,
And she never speer'd questions, as, "Where ha'e ye been?"
Or, "What were ye doin'?" an' "Wha were ye wi'?"—
We were happy thegither, my mither an' me:
But the puir bodie died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne.

When my mither was gane, for a while I was wae;
But a young chap was I, an' a wife I maun ha'e.
A wife soon I gat, an' I aye ha'e her yet,
An' folk think thegither we unco weel fit:
But my ain mind ha'e I, though I mauna speak o't,
For mair than her gallop I like my ain trot.
O! my auld mither died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne.

If I wi' a cronie be takin' a drap,
She'll yaumer, an' ca' me an auld drucken chap.
If an hour I bide out, loud she greets an' she yowls,
An' bans a' gude fellows, baith bodies an' souls:
And then sic a care she has o' her gudeman!
Ye would think I were doited—I canna but ban!
O! my auld mither died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne.

Our young gilpie dochters are lookin' for men,
An' I'll be a grandsire or ever I ken:

Our laddies are thinkin' o' rulin' the roast—
Their father, auld bodie, 's as deaf as a post!
But he sees their upsettin', sae crouse an' sae bauld:—
O! why did I marry, an' wherefore grow auld?
My mither! ye died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne!

THERE 'S NEVER AN END O' HER FLYTIN AN' DIN.

THERE 's joy to the lave, but there 's sadness to me;
For my gudewife an' I can do a' thing but 'gree:
In but-house an' ben-house, baith outby an' in,
There 's never an end o' her flytin' an' din.

She 's girnin' at e'enin'—she 's girnin' at morn—
A' hours o' the day in my flesh she 's a thorn:
At us baith a' the neighbour-folk canna but grin:
There 's never an end o' her flytin' an' din.

She scolds at the lasses, she skelps at the bairns;
An' the chairs an' the creepies she flings them in cairns.
I'm joyfu' when aff frae the house I can rin:
There 's never an end o' her flytin' an' din.

When I bid her speak laigher, fu' scornfu' she sneers;
Syne she skreighs like a goslin', till a' body hears;

Then I maun sing sma', just to keep a hale skin:
There 's never an end o' her flytin' and din.

Ance deaved to the heart by her ill-scrapit tongue,
To quiet her I tried wi' a gude hazel rung:—
Wi' the tangs she repaid me, and thought it nae sin:
There 's never an end o' her flytin' an' din.

There 's ae thing I ken, an' that canna be twa—
I wish frae this world she ance were awa';
An' I trust, if ayont to the ill place she win,
They'll be able to bear wi' her flytin' an' din.

To the wa' the door rattles—that 's her comin' ben;
An' I maun gi'e o'er or the Luckie would ken.
Gude save us! she 's clearin' her throat to begin:
The Lord keep ye a' frae sic flytin' an' din!

A MAIDEN'S MEDITATIONS.

Nae sweetheart ha'e I,
  Yet I'm no that ill-faur'd:
But there 's ower monie lasses,
  An' wooers are scaur'd.
This night I the hale
  O' my tocher would gi'e
If a' ither bodie
  Were married but me.

Syne I would get plenty
About me to speer—
Folk wou'dna be fashious
'Bout beauty or gear.
Hearts broken in dozens
Around I would see,
If a' ither bodie
Were married but me.

Ae lover would ha'e
A' my errands to rin;
Anither should tend me
Baith outby an' in;
An' to keep me gude-humour'd
Would tak twa or three,
If a' ither bodie
Were married but me.

Fond wooers in dozens
Where I hac'na ane,
An' worshippin' hearts
Where I'm langin' alane—
Frae mornin' to e'enin'
How bless'd would I be,
If a' ither bodie
Were married but me?

A daft dream was you—
It has faded awa':
Nae bodie in passin'
E'er gi'es *me* a ca':

Nae sweetheart adorin'
I ever shall see,
Till a' ither bodie
Be married but me!

MY MINNIE MAUNA KEN.

COME sleely up the burnie's side
When starnies ope their een;
An' quietly through the winnock keek,
But say to nane, Gude-e'en!
An' creep alang ahint the dyke,
Where nane can hear or see;
For O! my minnie mauna ken
That ye come courtin' me!

Ye'll wait nae lang till out I slip;
Syne gi'e a hoast or twa,
An' soon I'll sittin' be wi' you
Ahint the kailyard-wa'!
But there ye mauna keep me lang,
Wi' fleechin' words sae slee;
For O! my minnie mauna ken
That ye come courtin' me!

At kirk or market when we meet,
If I should pass ye by,

An' seem to think ye far ower laigh
To catch a maiden's eye:
Ne'er gloom at me, as ance ye did,
Nor think I lightly thee;
For O! my minnie mauna ken
That ye come courtin' me!

My minnie brags o' a' her lands,
Her mailins, and her gear:
My brithers o' their sister fair
Are boastin' late an' air;
And kent they who that sister loved,
Their hate would follow thee;
And sae my minnie mauna ken
That ye come courtin' me!

It may be good to live in wealth—
To walk in claithing braw;
But O! a leal young heart's first love
Is better than it a':
Than a', ae glint o' love frae thee
Is dearer to my e'e;
But O! my minnie mauna ken
That ye come courtin' me!

The time is comin' round about
When I will care for nane;
But take the laddie whom I love—
I never loved but ane.
A year or two will soon gang by,
An' syne I'll follow thee,

Although my minnie mauna ken
That ye come courtin' me.

Come sleely up the burnie's side
When starnies ope their een,
An' quietly through the'winnock keek,
But say to nane, Gude e'en!
An' creep alang ahint the dyke,
Where nane can hear or see;
For O! my minnie mauna ken
That ye come courtin' me!

KATE CARNEGIE.

SONG.

My life is a burden—nae pleasure ha'e I;
I'm grainin', baith e'enin' an' mornin'.
'Cause why? I'm in love, and I darena e'en try,
For fear o' her floutin' an' scornin'.
She 's a jewel of a kimmer—as straight as an ash;
But I fear I maun jump o'er a craigie;
For in spite o' my love, an' in spite o' my cash,
I'm nae favourite wi' Katie Carnegie!

Gudewife! bring a bicker, I'll slocken my drouth—
That ale was na spoilt i' the brewin'.
Heartbroken and wae in the hours o' my youth—
Love—true love—has been my undoin'!

And why should Kate care for a gomach like me?
I've glour'd aft her aft wi' a gleg e'e,
But though I'm in love—though I fear I maun die—
I ne'er spoke o't to Katie Carnegie.

Gi'es a waucht o' the ale—she 's the queen o' the Strath—
And what is to hinder me tryin'?
The hard-hearted kimmer! she cou'dna weel laugh
An' jeer at a man who is dyin'!
Just ae ither stoup!—what the deil makes me sad?
Gae, laddie, and saddle my naigie;
And if ony ane speer where I'm till on the yaud, ..
I'm awa' to court Katie Carnegie!

THE MAID I DAURNA NAME.

I wish I were a hinny-bee,
That I awa' might sing,—
Upo' the buds o' a bonnie bower,
When the e'enin' fa's, to hing,
And be bless'd wi' ae look o' a bonnie face
Like the sun-glint on the fell—
The face o' ane—a precious ane—
Whase name I daurna tell!

I wish I were a breathin' wind,
That I might pree her mou',

An' wander blessed by her side,
The woods an' valleys through;
An' clasp her waist sae jimpy sma',
Where grows the muirland bell;
An' pass ae hour o' love wi' her
Whase name I daurna tell.

The laverock loves the simmer lift—
The cornerake clover green—
An' the mither loves her bairnie's face,
Where its father's smile is seen;
The lintie loves the hawthorn hedge—
The blackbird lo'es the dell—
But mair than a' I lo'e the maid
Whase name I daurna tell.

The misty mornin' often brings
A sunny afternoon;
An' March, wi' hands sae sleety cauld,
Leads gladsome May an' June:
An' maybe yet, or a' be done,
I'll happy be mysel',
When she is mine—the precious ane—
Whase name I daurna tell.

THE PACKMAN.

THE fire we sat round on a cauld winter night—
Mysel' an' my dochters were spinnin'—
When in came the pedler, wi' ellwand in hand,
And the sweat frae the bodie was rinnin'.
Wi' beck an' wi' bow, and wi' "Goodness be here!"
He trampit in o'er to the ingle;
Syne open'd his pack fu' o' claes o' the best—
Wi' the sight o't my lugs they play'd tingle!

Fu' o' jokin' an' cracks was the slee, pawky loun—
Weel kent he how braw things becam' folk;
An' my dochters he praised till we cou'dna but buy;
For he ca'd a' our neighbours but sham folk.
The deil break his shanks! he had plenty o' news,
And he clatter'd, and coost me wi' glamour,
Till quarters I promised to gi'e for a night,
And to make our bien but-house his chaumer.

The morn I got up, as gudewife should do,—
To packmen there 's naething to lippen,—
And soon followed after me Chirsty and Meg,
But Jean came na after them skippin'.
Where is she? why waits she? my youngest and best—
My ain Jean, my bonnie wee burdie—
Run awa? The light limmer—the deil break his banes—
Was the oily-tongued chapman, Tam Purdie!

THE BONNIE ROWAN BUSH.

THE bonnie rowan bush
In yon lane glen—
Where the burnie clear doth gush
In yon lane glen;
My head is white and auld,
An' my bluid is thin and cauld,—
But I lo'e the bonnie rowan bush
In yon lane glen.

My Jeanie first I met
In yon lane glen—
When the grass wi' dew was wet
In yon lane glen;
The moon was shinin' sweet,
An' our hearts wi' love did beat,—
By the bonnie, bonnie rowan bush
In yon lane glen.

O! she promised to be mine
In yon lane glen;
Her heart she did resign
In yon lane glen:
An' monie a happy day
Did o'er us pass away,
Beside the bonnie rowan bush
In yon lane glen.

Sax bonnie bairns had we
In yon lane glen—
Lads an' lasses young an' spree
In yon lane glen;
An' a blither family
Than ours there cou'dna be,
Beside the bonnie rowan bush
In yon lane glen.

Now my auld wife's gane awa'
Frae yon lane glen;
An' though simmer sweet doth fa'
On yon lane glen,
To me its beauty's gane,
For alake! I sit alane,
Beside the bonnie rowan bush
In yon lane glen.

THE AULD BEGGAR MAN.

The Auld Beggar Man is a hearty auld cock;—
Wi' his sair-tatter'd rags an his meikle meal-pock,
He lives like a king in the midst o' the lan',—
He's a slee pawkie bodie the Auld Beggar Man.

He has a white pow and a fresh ruddy cheek,
For there's Sabbath to him ilka day o' the week;
An' he daunders aye onward the best way he can:
He's a cantie bit carle the Auld Beggar Man.

The gudewife sets his chair by the clear ingle-side,
Where his feet may grow warm an' his claes may be dried;
Syne the hale kintra's clashes he screeds them aff han':
He's a gash, gabbin' birkie, the Auld Beggar Man.

Wi' the gudeman he cracks about cattle an' corn,—
Whether this rig or that ane the best crap has borne;
How aits up ha'e risen an owsen ha'e fa'n:
Like a beuk he can argue, the Auld Beggar Man.

The bairnies crowd round him his stories to hear,
While maistly the wee things are swarfin' wi' fear;
An' he tells them how witches wi' Auld Clootie ban,
Till they creep to the knee o' the Auld Beggar Man.

"He's ane o' our ain folk," the lasses aye say,
When their wooers drap in at the close o' the day;
Sae he hears them mak' up ilka lovin' bit plan,—
He's an auld-farrant bodie, the Auld Beggar Man.

When the supper is done, an' the grace has been said,
'Mang the strae in the barn is the auld bodie's bed;
There he sleeps like a tap till the brak' o' the dawn,—
He's hale at the heart yet, the Auld Beggar Man.

Wi' his staff in his hand, and his pock on his back,
He stoiters through life on a rough staney track;
His days whiles are dowie, but sin' they began
He has trusted in Heaven, the Auld Beggar Man.

YE WINNA LET ME BE.

THAE een o' yours are bonnie blue,
An' O! they sparkle sae
That I maun look, an' I maun love,
Until my heart grow wae.
They jewels seem o' meikle price,
Aneath the dark e'ebree;
Ilk glance frae them gangs through my heart,—
O! they winna let me be.

Thae lips o' yours are cherries twa;
But floutin' words they speak;
An' ahint the door o' cauld disdain
My heart I canna' steek.
Your bonnie een an' your jeerin' words
Are ever grievin' me:
Ye cuttie quean! it 's an awfu' thing
That ye winna let me be.

Whene'er I sleep I dream o' thee,
An' o' thy bonnie face;
I think nae then o' your scornfu' ways,
Ye little scant-o'-grace!
To break a truthfu' heart like mine
Is the height o' cruelties;
Ye've gi'en it monie a fearfu' stound,
For ye winna let me be.

But I ha'e gotten a wylie plan
To haud ye out o' ill:
The holy priest—ye needna laugh;
Your mirth I wat he'll spill.
He'll say the fearsome words, that ane
Will make o' you an' me;
An' then you'll plague your bonnie sel'
If ye winna let me be!

THE BANKS OF TAY.

THE ship is on its seaward path,
An' frae the shore the breezes blaw:
Now Scotland's cliffs sae dear to me
Aneath the wavin' waters fa'.
My hame is growin' far awa'—
It lies aneath yon hill-tap gray—
Yon last-seen spot o' Scotland's soil
That rises by the Banks of Tay.

Fareweel, ye mossy fountains wild!
Where yon fair stream doth softly rin:
To ilka wildwood-shaded pool
To ilka tumblin' roarin' linn—
To ilka burnie that doth win
Through heathery muirs its silent way—
I bid fareweel; for now my hame
Is biggit far frae bonnie Tay.

Fareweel, ye hames o' pure delight,
That I ha'e lo'ed sae weel and lang!
Ye simmer birdies! ye maun sing
To others now your cheering sang!
Fareweel, ye holms, where lovers gang
Upon the peacefu' Sabbath-day:
In youth I lov'd—in age I'll mind
The green an' bonnie Banks of Tay.

Be blessin's on ilk cot an' ha'
That by thy braes o' hazel rise;
Be a' thing bonnie where thou rins,
An' a' thing happy 'neath thy skies.
Though far frae thee my boatie flies,
The friends I love beside thee stray:
My heart fu' dead an' cauld will be
Ere I forget the Banks of Tay.

The streams are wide where I am gaun,
An' on they row through boundless woods;
But dearer is thy Hieland wave
Than yonder wild and foreign floods.
Thy haughs sae green—the simmer clouds
That o'er thy shelter'd hamlets stray—
I'll mind for Love an' Friendship's sake:
Fareweel, ye bonnie Banks of Tay.

THE LASS OF TURRIT HA'.

Amang the hills, the rocky hills,
Where whirrs the moorcock, waves the heather,
As bonnie morn, in lightsome June,
I wi' a lassie did forgather.
Her naked feet, amang the grass,
Seem'd dancin' snaw-white lambies twa,
As she gaed singin' through the glen—
The bonnie lass of Turrit Ha'!

I stood upon an auld gray stane,
An' follow'd her wi' straining e'e,
As bairnies look on fallin' starns
That o'er the lift glint silentlie.
Her sang, her bonnie mornin' sang,
Upon my heart did thrilling fa';
A thing of light and love was she,
The bonnie lass of Turrit Ha'!

I met her on the Sabbath-day,
When winds amang the woods were lown—
When o'er the muirs o' gorse an' broom
Came sweet the plaintive chanted tune.
And monie a bonnie quean was there;
But she was fairest o' them a'—
The bonniest tree within the wood—
The bonnie lass of Turrit Ha'!

An' when they sang the holy Psalm,
  Her voice was sweetest, dearest there—
'Mang a' that gaed to GOD aboon,
  Hers was the purest holy prayer!
I thought the light o' day was gane
  When she ayont the kirkyard wa',
By yon burn-brae gaed wanderin hame—
  The bonnie lass of Turrit Ha'!

A' things in earth an' Heaven aboon
  Ha'e something worthy to be loved;
But mair than a' I met afore,
  That lassie's smile my bosom moved.
The birdie lo'es the summer bush,
  The maukin' lo'es the greenwood-shaw;
But nane can tell how weel I lo'ed
  The bonnie lass of Turrit Ha'!

The summer bud o' Turrit Glen,
  Alas! aneath the mools is laid;
The winds that waved her raven hair
  Are cauldly whistlin' o'er her bed,
But, while yon silent moon doth shine—
  Sae lang as I ha'e breath to draw—
I'll mind the gem o' youth an' love—
  The bonnie lass of Turrit Ha'!

MARY HAMILTON.

As dreamin' in yon wood I lay,
  A spirit came before me there,—
Immortal seem'd its holy form,
  Frae Heaven sent, it was sae fair.
Its peacefu' presence seem'd to bring
  Deep joy upon yon forest lone:
But aye I sigh'd, though fair eneuch,
  Your no like Mary Hamilton!

Her heart by Gudeness' self was made—
  Her laugh is like an angel's voice—
Her sang o' sweetness lightsomely
  Gars Nature in her joy rejoice!
Her een are starns o' living love,
  Whilk hallow a' they glint upon,—
The wale o' precious womankind
  Is bonnie Mary Hamilton!

When Life's rude storms are ragin' hie—
  An' Poverty sits by my door—
When Wae is twinin' at my heart—
  An' Envy counts my failin's o'er—
I'm sad eneuch; but in a blink
  My grainin' sorrow a' is gone,
If ae kind glint on me fa' frae
  The e'e o' Mary Hamilton.

'Mong lowly folk her hame is made;—
A puir man's bairn I wat is she;
But Love sits in her smeeky hame,
An' kindly, kindly smiles to me.
Like some sweet rose 'mang heather brown,
Upon a barren mountain-throne,
Is she within her father's ha'—
My bonnie Mary Hamilton!

Let a' wha think, if sic there be,
That Love an' Innocence are dreams—
That woman's heart is fause an' frail—
That purest Gudeness aft but seems—
That Maids are witches—we the fools
They cast their cheatrie glamour on—
Gae, look on her an' syne confess
There's truth in Mary Hamilton!

I wish upo' that bosky glen
The tearfu' e'eniu' dew were come;
I wish yon sun were o'er the hill—
That gushin' burnie's waters dim;
I wish the wanderin' e'enin' wind
Were whistlin' round the breckens lone—
That I might live anither hour
O' love wi' Mary Hamilton.

JANET.

I'LL mak' a fire upo' the knowe,
An' blaw it till it bleeze an' lowe;
Syne in 't I 'll ha'e ye brunt, I trow—
Ye ha'e bewitch'd me, Janet!

Your een in ilka starn I see—
The hale night lang I dream o' thee—
The bonnie lintie on the lea,
I liken to you, Janet!

When leaves are green, an' fresh an' fair—
When blithe an' sunny is the air—
I stroke my beard, and say they 're rare;
But naething like you, Janet!

'Twas but yestreen, as I gaed hame,
The Minister said, "What is your name?"
My answer—'deed I may think shame—
Was, "Sir, my name is Janet!"

Last Sabbath, as I sang the Psalm,
I fell into an unco dwaum,
An' naething frae my lips e'er cam'
But "Janet! Janet! Janet!"

I've fought, I've danced, an' drucken too;
But nane o' thae are like to do;

Sae I maun come an' speer at you,
"What ails me, think ye, Janet?"

I'll soon be either dead or daft,
Sic drams o' love frae you I've quaff'd;
Sae lay aside your woman-craft—
Ha'e mercy on me, Janet!

An' if ye winna, there's my loof,
I'll gar the Provost lead a proof,
An' pit ye 'neath the Tollbooth roof:
Syne what will ye do, Janet?

I'll make a fire upo' the knowe,
An' blaw it till it bleeze an' lowe;
Syne in't I'll ha'e ye brunt, I trow—
Ye ha'e bewitch'd me, Janet!

THE FALSE ONE.

They told me thou hadst faithless grown—
That gowd had wiled thy love frae me;
But my fond heart was constant still,
An' thought that false ye could na be;
It thought that Truth and Constancy
Within thy bosom dwellers were—
My Love nae ill of thee could think:
And art thou then sae fause an' fair?

My weary feet ha'e wander'd far,
That I might gaze upon thy brow—
That I might sit wi' thee again
Where mountain-burnies onward row.
An' hath it come to this? But now
Ye pass'd me wi' a heedless air:
An' can it be that I ha'e lo'ed
A thing sae very fause an' fair?

An' hast thou then forgot the time
When bairnies, we thegither ran
Upon the wild blae-berrie braes,
Where Summer's breath the birks did fan?—
Hast thou forgot the lilies wan,
Wi' which I aften deck'd your hair?—
An' how I watch'd your infant sleep?—
And art thou then sae fause an' fair?

Your plighted vows are broken a'—
The maiden-vows ye gave to me;
Ye ha'e forgot the hazel glen—
Ye ha'e forgot the trystin' tree—
Where, under Heaven's open e'e,
Ye listen'd to my young heart's prayer.
How could ye, lass, beguile me sae?
How could ye prove sae fause an' fair?

I see thee cast thy sun-like smiles
O'er yon fond heart that doats on thine:—
May Joy aye dwell wi' him an' thee,
Though, lassie, thou hast broken mine.

Yet, ere thy love I a' resign—
The sight o' thee for evermair—
Wi' 'tearfu' e'e I speer if ane
Can live sae very fause an' fair?

SUMMER WOOING.

THE green broom was bloomin',—
The daisy was seen
Peerin' up to the sky
Frae the flower-spangled green,—
The burnie was loupin'
By bank an' by brae,
While alang by its margin
A lassie did gae.
She heard the wee birdies
Sing hie in the cluds,
An' the downy wing'd breezes
Creep through the green wuds;
An' she saw the bright e'enin' sun
Lighting the whole:—
There was joy in the lassie's face—
Peace in her soul!

She sat in the shade
Of a sweet-scented briar,
An' the sounds of the wild wood
Came saft on her ear;

While the flushes o' feelin'
  Swept o'er her sweet face,
As the clouds o'er the moon
  One another do chase.
In the peace of the twilight
  Her soul did repose—
Where green leaves were wavin'
  Her eyelids did close,
She lay in that bower
  In her innocent sleep,
And spirits around her
  Their vigils did keep.

The butterfly breathed
  On her cheek for a flower,
As a pure maiden blush
  Spoke the dream o' the hour.
While the lassie was sleepin'
  A bauld youth came by,—
There was life in his footstep
  An' love in his eye.
He stood by the maiden
  Who lay in her dream,
An' heard her in slumber
  Laigh murmur his name.
An idol she seem'd
  Sae heavenly fair,
An' he an idolater
  Worshippin' there.

He kiss'd her sweet lips,
An' her warm cheek he press'd;
An' the lassie awoke
On her leal lover's breast!

The e'enin was fa'in'
On mountain an' fell,
The rush o' the stream
Through the darkness did swell;
But the maid an' her true love
Ne'er heeded the hour,
As they sat in their bliss
In that green briar bower.
He tauld a' his love,
While her tears fell like rain,—
Their joy was sae joyfu'
It maistly was pain.
They hamewith return'd
Through the simmer mist gray,
An' twa hearts were happy
For ever and aye!

THE PRISONER'S SONG.

WERE I a little simmer bird,
Awa', on twitterin' wing,
I far wad flee, 'mang wild-woods green,
An' blithely I would sing;

An' I wad sit by ilka flower,
An' taste ilk drap o' dew—
A' wad be mine where light hath shone,—
Green glens and waters blue.

O ! I wad flit o'er heather'd hills,
An' sit by mountain streams—
O ! I wad be where nightly yet
I wander in my dreams—
Pu'ing the bonnie mountain-flowers,
An' listening to the sang
O' mountain-birds,—the mossy rocks
An' hoary crags amang.

The birds may sit where'er they list,
Where'er they list may flee;
They are na barr'd, as I am now,
Wi' wa's baith thick and hie.
My heart is dead wi' weariness,—
Here breezes never blaw;
An' tears, like those within my e'en,
Are a' the dews that fa'.

The simmer e'enin's settin' sun
Into my dungeon throws
Ae single ray,—a holy flower
That, 'mid the darkness, grows:
A joyfu' tale it tells to me
O' freedom's happiness;
And, though the joy I cannot taste,
I love it not the less.

It tells me o' a gowany glen
Afar, where it hath been—
A deep, wild dell, amang the hills,
A' spread wi' breckens green:—
O' singin' birds an' simmer suns,
An' winds, fu' gently swellin';—
O' bonnie burns—fair Freedom's type—
To me that ray is tellin'.

It whispers what the free enjoy
On mountain and in glen,—
Things holy, fresh, and beautiful,
That I maun never ken.—
O! stay a while, thou simmer ray,
Nor leave me thus alane;—
O! dim, an' dimmer, now it grows;
An' now—the light is gane!

WE ARE BRETHREN A'.

A HAPPY bit hame this auld world would be,
If men, when they're here, could make shift to agree,
An' ilk said to his neighbour, in cottage an' ha',
"Come, gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'."

I ken na why ane wi' anither should fight,
When to 'gree would make a' body cosie an' right,

When man meets wi' man, 'tis the best way ava,
To say, "Gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'."

My coat is a coarse ane, an' yours may be fine,
And I maun drink water while you may drink wine;
But we baith ha'e a leal heart, unspotted to shaw:
Sae gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

The knave ye would scorn, the unfaithfu' deride;
Ye would stand like a rock, wi' the truth on your side;
Sae would I, an' nought else would I value a straw;
Then gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

Ye would scorn to do fausely by woman or man;
I haud by the right aye, as weel as I can;
We are ane in our joys, our affections, an' a';
Come, gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

Your mither has lo'ed you as mithers can lo'e;
An' mine has done for me what mithers can do;
We are ane hie an' laigh, an' we should na be twa:
Sae gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

We love the same simmer day, sunny and fair;
Hame! Oh, how we love it, an' a' that are there!
Frae the pure air o' Heaven the same life we draw—
Come, gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

Frail, shakin' Auld Age, will soon come o'er us baith,
An' creepin' alang at his back will be Death;

Syne into the same mither-yird we will fa':
Come, gi'e me your hand—WE ARE BRETHREN A'.

STEADFASTNESS.

FOLK sillerless may ca' us,—
We ha'e unco little gear;
Our wealth is gatherin' gey an' slow,—
'Twill ne'er be great, I fear.
But, though our lot be laigh eneuch,
An' though our life be wae,
We never yet ha'e fail'd a friend
And never fear'd a fae!

Although our parritch-cap be sma',
To him who needs it yet
We'll spare a sup, an' wi' the lave
A blessin' we will get.
We 've fendit aye in days gane by—
We'll fend through monie mae—
An' never fail a trustin' friend
An' never fear a fae!

Though some folk think that a' thing gude
In palaces doth dwell—
An' though the poor, to tempt an' vex,
Ha'e mair than I may tell;

There's ae thing yet—there's twa things yet—
To brag o' that we ha'e—
We never, never fail'd a friend,
An' never fear'd a fae!

Folk shou'dna mind the ragged coat,
Nor yet the horny han',—
'Tis by the heart his breast doth hap
That they should judge the man.
Ye ken there are in cottages,
Where poor folk plackless gae,
True hearts that never fail'd a friend,
An' never fear'd a fae!

THE HONEST AND TRUE.

Your soldier is bloody, your statesman a knave;
Frae the true heart nae honour they ever shall have:
Their glitter an' fauseness may gar our hearts grue;
But honour to him wha is honest and true!

Will we bow to the coof wha has naething but gear?
Or the fool whom a college has fitted wi' lear?
Na, troth! we'll gi'e honour where honour is due—
To the Man wha has ever been honest and true!

We'll ne'er speer if he come frae France, Holland, or
Spain,
Ere we pledge manly friendship wi' him to maintain—
Be he Mussulman, Christian, Pagan, or Jew,
'Tis a' ane to us if he's honest and true!

His skin may be black, or his skin may be white,—
We carena a fig, if his bosom be right:
Though his claes be in rags, an' the wind blawin' through,
We'll honour the man wha is honest and true!

While the sun's in the heavens, the stars in the sky,—
Till the earth be a sea, till the ocean run dry,—
We'll honour but him to whom honour is due,
The MAN wha has ever been honest and true!

THE WORLD'S FU' O' SKAITH AND TOIL.

THE world's fu' o' skaith and toil—
Its gruesome face doth seldom smile;
But what care I how sad it be?
Its sadness shall never danton me!

An' men are fause an' women frail—
An' Friendship aft at need doth fail;
But, though the warst o't I may see,
Their fauseness shall never danton me!

Life's dearest lights may fade awa',
An' dour misfortunes down may fa';
But I will keep a spirit hie,—
The warst o't shall never danton me!

O! let me ha'e a leal true heart—
Let honour never frae me part;
And, though in want, sae cauld, I dee,
Even that shall never danton me!

THE SHEPHERDESS.

To yon deep mountain glen my wee lambkins I'll ca',
Where o'er the brown heather the saftest winds blaw;
And there, 'mang the broom bushes, blithely I'll sing,
Till the crags on the hill-taps fu' cheerily ring!

And then when I've herded till fair eventide,
I'll see a bit doggie come down the hill-side;
And soon 'neath the broom, where nacbody can see,
My dearie will share his gray plaidie wi' me!

He'll ca' me his dear, and he'll ca' me his pet—
He'll seek but ae kiss,—and he twa-three will get:
How can I refuse them?—my heart is sae fain
When he dauts me and ca's me his dearest—his ain!

Wi' sour, unco looks, I awhile may him tease,
And tell him that true love and falsehood are faes;
And syne, to repay him, a kiss I will gi'e,
And a press o' the hand, and a glance o' the e'e!

Rin down the glen, burnie—rin saftly alang—
Adown the glen, burnie, wi' you I'll no gang;
At gloaming I'll meet him, and cannily he
Will guide to the fauld my wee lammies and me.

BE STILL, BE STILL, THOU BEATING HEART.

A SONG.

Be still, be still, thou beating heart,—
Oh cease, ye tears, that fill my e'e:
In warldly joys I ha'e nae part—
Nae blithesome morning dawns for me.
I once was glad as summer winds,
When fondling 'mang the grass sae green;
But pleasure now hath left my breast—
I am na like what I ha'e been.

I once was loved,—I loved again
The spreest lad in a' our glen;
I kent na then o' care or pain,
Or burning brow, or tortured brain.

I braided, then, my flowing hair,
And had o' love and peace my fill;
Deep, deep I drank—but a' has gane—
Oh, cease thy beating: Heart, be still.

Why should two hearts, together twined,
Be sever'd by stern Fate's decree?
Why doth the brightest star of mind
Oft turn its darkest cloud to be?
My Jamie left his native glen,
My silken purse wi' gowd to fill;
But oh, he ne'er came back again—
Oh, cease thy beating: Heart, be still.

Why should I longer watch and weep?
Hame, hame to yonder glen I'll gae;
There in my bridal bed I'll sleep,
Made i' th' kirkyard cauld and blae.
I'll soon, soon wi' my Jamie meet,
Where sorrow has nae power to kill;
Earth's woes are past—and my poor heart
Will soon have peace—will soon be still.

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TO THE LADY OF MY HEART.

I dream'd I had a diamond mine
Ayont yon billowy sea,
An' a' thing rich an' a' thing rare
Was brought to pleasure me.
Earth's fairest things were at my gate
An' standing in my ha';
But forth I came in that proud hour
An' chose thee 'mang them a'.

I dream'd I was a powerful king,
Wi' servants at command,—
Ae word wad brought unto my knee
The brightest in the land;
But ne'er on palaced halls I look'd—
I hied me to the lea,
An', mair than crowns, a loving heart
I blithely gave to thee.

I woke, and was, what I am now,
A man o' laigh degree,—
Nae wealth ha'e I—nae silken pomp—
Nae gather'd gowd to gi'e:
But I ha'e something yet to boast,
Ne'er bought wi' warld's gear,—
A heart that never fail'd a friend,—
An' what wad ye ha'e mair?

A CASTLE IN THE AIR.

Come, sit amang the daisies,
Beside the violets blue,
A dream I have to tell you—
An' O! if it were true!
For 'tis o' love an' happiness,
An' ither fireside things:
The scenes o' Scotland's cottage hames
That dream before me brings.

I thought that baith thegither
We gaed across the sea,
An' deep into the forest land
O' yon far countrie;
Syne we chose a very pleasant spot
Beside a woodland lake,
An' there a lowly forest hame,
Of tall trees, we did make.

We biggit it beside a stream,
Within a forest glade,
Where the fairest o' the woodland things
Their dwelling-place had made.
It was a lowly hamestead,
An' round it, to an' fro,
A sun-nurs'd flower its clusters rich
Fu' gracefully did throw.

We rear'd our modest dwelling—
We clear'd our forest land—
An' through the bosky glens sae wild
We wander'd hand in hand.
Like a voice frae hame, the blue bird
Aye cheer'd us wi' its sang;—
We were as happy in the woods
As simmer days are lang.

My dream o' peace an' happiness
Was far o'er gude to last:
The light grew dim, syne pass'd away,—
The sky grew sair o'ercast.
'Twas but a vision o' the night,
An' came but to deceive;
But, boding o' a gown o' gowd,
We'll maybe get the sleeve!

THE LASSES.

The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Rise up, ye louns—ye daurna sit—
Around me join ilk voice to mine—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!

Though some may geck at womankind,
An' slight them sair to shaw their wit—

Their loving subjects leal are we—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Chorus—The lasses yet! the lasses yet! &c.

Their kindly an' their lovesome ways
To them ilk manly heart should knit:
The flowers o' earth an' joys o' life—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Chorus—The lasses yet! the lasses yet! &c.

We dinna like a weary wind
That ever in ae airt doth sit:
They change, an' changes lightsome are—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Chorus—The lasses yet! the lasses yet! &c.

Wha on the earth ha'e warmest hearts?
Wha welcome first the stranger fit?
Wha bless our youth an' cheer our age?—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Chorus—The lasses yet! the lasses yet! &c.

They're kindly, frae the grannie auld,
That crooning in the neuk doth sit,
To laughing gilpies herding kye—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Chorus—The lasses yet! the lasses yet! &c.

The lift is sweet in summer rain,
And when the sun its arch doth light;

And sweet are they in smiles or tears—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Chorus—The lasses yet! the lasses yet! &c.

Auld gabbin' gray-beards please at morn;
And rantin' chields when yill we get;
But, ance and aye, the dearies charm—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Chorus—The lasses yet! the lasses yet! &c.

Camsterie they at times may be;
But louring clouds will quickly flit:
The warmest sun comes after shade—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Chorus—The lasses yet! the lasses yet! &c.

The lasses! frae the jewell'd queen
To rosy dears, in ha' and hut,—
The lasses! here and everywhere—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Chorus—The lasses yet! the lasses yet!
Rise up, ye louns—ye daurna sit—
Around me join ilk voice to mine—
The lasses yet! the lasses yet!

PART III.

POEMS,

CHIEFLY IN THE SCOTTISH DIALECT, ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE FEELINGS OF THE INTELLIGENT AND RELIGIOUS AMONG THE WORKING-CLASSES OF SCOTLAND.

STANZAS ON THE BIRTHDAY OF BURNS.

This is the natal day of him
  Who, born in want and poverty,
Burst from his fetters, and arose
  The freest of the free,—

Arose to tell the watching earth
  What lowly men could feel and do,—
To show that mighty, Heaven-like souls
  In cottage hamlets grew.

Burns! thou hast given us a name
  To shield us from the taunts of scorn;—
The plant that creeps amid the soil
  A glorious flower hath borne.

Before the proudest of the earth
We stand with an uplifted brow;
Like us, THOU wast a toil-worn man,
And we are noble now!

Inspir'd by thee the lowly hind
All soul-degrading meanness spurns;
Our teacher, saviour, saint, art thou,
Immortal ROBERT BURNS!

WE ARE LOWLY.

WE are lowly—very lowly,
Misfortune is our crime;
We have been trodden under foot
From all recorded time.
A yoke upon our necks is laid,
A burden to endure;
To suffer is our legacy,
The portion of the poor!

We are lowly—very lowly,
And scorned from day to day;
Yet we have something of our own
Power cannot take away.

By tyrants we are toiled to death—
  By cold and hunger killed;
But peace is in our hearts, it speaks
  Of duties all fulfilled!

We are lowly—very lowly,
  Nor house nor land have we;
But there's a heritage for us
  While we have eyes to see.
They cannot hide the lovely stars,
  Words in creation's book,
Although they hold their fields and lanes
  Corrupted by our look!

We are lowly—very lowly,
  And yet the fairest flowers
That by the wayside raise their eyes,—
  Thank God they still are ours!
Ours is the streamlet's mellow voice,
  And ours the common dew;
We still dare gaze on hill and plain,
  And field and meadow too!

We are lowly—very lowly,—
  But when the cheerful Spring
Comes forth with flowers upon her feet
  To hear the throstle sing,
Although we dare not seek the shade
  Where haunt the forest deer—
The waving leaves we still can see,
  The hymning birds can hear!

We are lowly—very lowly,
Our hedgerow paths are gone
Where woodbines laid their fairy hands
The hawthorn's breast upon.
Yet slender mercies still are left,—
And heaven doth endure,
And hears the prayers that upward rise
From the afflicted poor!

WE'LL MAKE THE WORLD BETTER YET.

The braw folk crush the poor folk down,
An' blood an' tears are rinnin' het;
An' meikle ill and meikle wae,
We a' upon the earth ha'e met.
An' Falsehood aft comes boldly forth,
And on the throne o' Truth doth sit;
But true hearts a'—gae work awa'—
We 'll make the World better yet!

Though Superstition, hand in hand,
Wi' Prejudice—that gruesome hag—
Gangs linkin' still—though Misers make
Their heaven o' a siller bag:
Though Ignorance, wi' bloody hand,
Is tryin' Slavery's bonds to knit—
Put knee to knee, ye bold an' free,
We'll make the World better yet!

See yonder coof wha becks an' bows
To yonder fool wha's ca'd a lord:
See yonder gowd-bedizzen'd wight—
Yon fopling o' the bloodless sword.
Baith slave, an' lord, an' soldier too,
Maun honest grow, or quickly flit—
For freemen a', baith grit an' sma',—
We'll make the World better yet!

Yon dreamer tells us o' a land
He frae his airy brain hath made—
A land where Truth and Honesty
Have crushed the serpent Falsehood's head.
But by the names o' Love and Joy,
An' Common-sense, an' Lear, an' Wit,
Put back to back,—and in a crack
We'll make *our* World better yet!

The Knaves an' Fools may rage an' storm,
The growling Bigot may deride—
The trembling Slave away may rin,
And in his Tyrant's dungeon hide;
But Free and Bold, and True and Good,
Unto this oath their seal have set—
"Frae pole to pole we'll free ilk soul,
The World *shall* be better yet!"

THE HERO.

My Hero is na deck'd wi' gowd—
  He has nae glittering state;
Renown upon a field o' blood
  In war he hasna met!
He has nae siller in his pouch,
  Nae menials at his ca';
The Proud o' earth frae him would turn,
  And bid him stand awa'!

His coat is hame-spun hodden-gray—
  His shoon are clouted sair—
His garments, maist unhero-like,
  Are a' the waur o' wear:
His limbs are strong—his shoulders broad—
  His hands were made to plough—
He's rough without, but sound within—
  His heart is bauldly true!

He toils at e'en, he toils at morn—
  His wark is never through;
A coming life o' weary toil
  Is ever in his view!
But on he trudges, keeping aye
  A stout heart to the brae,—
And proud to be an honest man
  Until his dying day.

His hame a hame o' happiness
And kindly love may be;
And monie a nameless dwelling-place
Like his we still may see.
His happy altar-hearth so bright
Is ever bleezing there;
And cheerfu' faces round it set
Are an unending prayer!

The poor man, in his humble hame,
Like God, who dwells aboon,
Makes happy hearts around him there—
Sae joyfu' late and soon!
His toil is sair, his toil is lang;
But weary nights and days,
Hame—happiness akin to his—
A hunder-fauld repays!

Go, mock at Conquerors and Kings!
What happiness give they?
Go, tell the painted butterflies
To kneel them down and pray!
Go, stand erect in manhood's pride—
Be what a man should be—
Then come, and to *my* Hero bend
Upon the grass your knee!

OUR KING.

We ha'e great folk—what for no?—
In our Lowland clachan;
Our Tailor 's an anointed King—
We carena for your laughin'.
Kings rare do gude,—but he 's done some;
And for the rest, I'm thinking—
To tell the truth and shame the deil—
There 's nae king like our ain King!

He has nae power to head or hang—
'Mang tyrants ne'er was rankit;
Deil ane o' soldier kind has he—
For that the Lord be thankit!
Nae courtiers bend around his knees,
Wha fast to Nick are sinking,
Wi' rotten hearts and leein' tongues—
There 's nae king like our ain King!

The cash he spends is a' his ain,
He taks nae poor man's siller;
Ae douce gudewife 's enough for him,—
He 's kind and couthie till her.
The deil a penny debt has he—
Nor scarlet madams blinking—
He ne'er was by that slavery cursed—
There 's nae king like our ain King!

Frae bloody wars and ill-faur'd strife
His kingdom aye reposes,
Except when whiles the weans fa' out,
And make some bloody noses.
And syne the Tailor takes his taws
And paiks them round like winking:
Our King redeems the bloody pack—
There's nae king like our ain King!

His palace-roof is made o' strae—
His crown is a blue bannet—
His sceptre is a pair o' sheers—
His queen is christen'd Janet.
He's nae oppressor—tears o' wae
He ne'er delights in drinking;
The first o' honest kings is he—
There's nae king like our ain King!

THE PUIR FOLK.

A SONG.

Some grow fu' proud o'er bags o' gowd,
And some are proud o' learning:
An honest poor man's worthy name
I take delight in earning.

Slaves needna try to run us down—
To knaves we're unco dour folk;
We're often wrang'd, but, deil may care!
We're honest folk, though puir folk!

Wi' Wallace wight we fought fu' weel,
When lairds and lords were jinking;
They knelt before the tyrant loun—
We brak his crown I'm thinking.
The muckle men he bought wi' gowd—
Syne he began to jeer folk;
But neither swords, nor gowd, nor guile,
Could turn the sturdy puir folk!

When auld King Charlie tried to bind
Wi' airn saul and conscience,
In virtue o' his right divine,
An' ither daft-like nonsense—
Wha raised at Marston such a stour,
And made the tyrants fear folk?
Wha prayed and fought wi' Pym and Noll?
The trusty, truthfu' puir folk!

Wha ance upon auld Scotland's hills
Were hunted like the paitrick,
And hack'd wi' swords, and shot wi' guns,
Frae Tummel's bank to Ettrick,—
Because they wouldna' let the priest
About their conscience steer folk?
The lairds were bloodhounds to the clan—
The Martyrs were the puir folk!

When Boston boys at Bunker's hill
  Gart Slavery's minions falter;
While ilka hearth in a' the bay
  Was made fair Freedom's altar;
Wha fought the fight, and gained the day?
  Gae wa', ye knaves! 'twas our folk:
The beaten great men served a king—
  The victors a' were puir folk!

We saw the corn and haud the plough—
  We a' work for our living;
We gather nought but what we've sawn—
  A' else we reckon thieving:—
And for the loun wha fears to say
  He comes o' lowly, sma' folk,
A wizen'd saul the creature has—
  Disown him will the puir folk!

Great sirs, and mighty men o' earth,
  Ye aften sair misca' us;
And hunger, cauld, and poverty
  Come after ye to thraw us.
Yet up our hearts we strive to heeze,
  In spite o' you and your folk;
But mind, enough's as gude's a feast,
  Although we be but puir folk!

We thank the Powers for gude and ill,
  As gratefu' folk should do, man;
But maist o' a' because our sires
  Were tailors, smiths, and ploughmen.

Good men they were as stanch as steel;
They didna wrack and screw folk
Wi' empty pouches—honest hearts—
Thank God, we come o' poor folk!

THE BURSTING OF THE CHAIN.

AN ANTHEM FOR THE THIRD CENTENARY OF THE REFORMATION.

(INSCRIBED TO THE REVEREND H. CLARKE.)

An offering to the shrine of Power
Our hands shall never bring—
A garland on the car of Pomp
Our hands shall never fling—
Applauding in the Conqueror's path
Our voices ne'er shall be;
But we have hearts to honour those
Who bade the world go free!

Stern Ignorance man's soul had bound
In fetters, rusted o'er
With tears—with scalding human tears—
And red with human gore;
But men arose—*the* Men to whom
We bend the freeman's knee—
Who, God-encouraged, burst the chain,
And made our fathers free!

Light dwelt where Darkness erst had been—
The morn of Mind arose—
The dawning of that Day of Love
Which never more shall close:
Joy grew more joyful, and more green
The valley and the lea,—
The glorious sun from Heaven look'd down,
And smiled upon the Free!

Truth came, and made its home below;
And Universal Love,
And Brotherhood, and Peace, and Joy,
Are following from above:
And happy ages on the earth
Humanity shall see;
And happy lips shall bless their names
Who made our children free!

Praise to the Good—the Pure—the Great—
Who made us what we are!—
Who lit the flame which yet shall glow
With radiance brighter far:—
Glory to them in coming time,
And through Eternity!
They burst the Captive's galling chain,
And bade the world go free!

WE ARE FREE.

Like lightning's flash,
  Upon the foe
We burst, and laid
  Their glories low!
Like mountain-floods
  We on them came—
Like withering blast
  Of scorching flame,
Like hurricane
  Upon the sea,—
Shout—shout again—
  Shout, We are Free!

We struck for God—
  We struck for life—
We struck for sire—
  We struck for wife—
We struck for home—
  We struck for all
That man doth lose
  By bearing thrall!
We struck 'gainst chains,
  For liberty!
Now, for our pains,
  Shout, We are Free!

Give to the slain
A sigh—a tear;—
A curse to those
Who spoke of fear!
Then eat your bread
In peace; for now
The Tyrant's pride
Is lying low!
His strength is broken—
His minions flee—
The VOICE hath spoken—
Shout, WE ARE FREE!

ENDURANCE.

IF you have borne the bitter taunts
Which proud poor men must bear;
If you have felt the upstart's sneer
Your heart like iron sear;
If you have heard yourself belied,
Nor answer'd word nor blow—
You have endured as I have done—
And poverty you know!

If you have heard old Mammon's laugh,
And borne of wealth the frown;

If you have felt your very soul
  Destroyed and casten down,—
And been compell'd to bear it all
  For sake of daily bread—
Then have you suffered what is laid
  Upon the poor man's head!

If you have seen your children starved,
  And wish'd to bow and die,
Crush'd by a load of bitterness,
  Scorn, and contumely;
If misery has gnaw'd your soul
  Until its food grew pain—
Then you have shed the bloody tears
  That cheeks of poor men stain!

There is a Book, and hypocrites
  Say they believe it true,
Which tells us men are equal all!
  Do they believe and do?
No, vampires! Christ they crucify
  In men of low degree:
Could souls decay—the poor man's soul
  A mortal thing would be!

THE BACCHANALIAN.

They make their feasts, and fill their cups—
They drink the rosy wine—
They seek for pleasure in the bowl:—
Their search is not like mine.
From misery I freedom seek—
I crave relief from pain;
From hunger, poverty, and cold—
I'll go get drunk again!

The wind doth through my garments run—
I'm naked to the blast;
Two days have flutter'd o'er my head
Since last I broke my fast.
But I'll go drink, and straightway clad
In purple I shall be;
And I shall feast at tables spread
With rich men's luxury!

My wife is naked,—and she begs
Her bread from door to door;
She sleeps on clay each night beside
Her hungry children four!
She drinks—I drink—for why? it drives
All poverty away;
And starving babies grow again
Like happy children gay!

In broad-cloth clad, with belly full,
A sermon you can preach;
But hunger, cold, and nakedness,
Another song would teach.
I'm bad and vile—what matters that
To outcasts such as we?
Bread is denied—come, wife, we'll drink
Again, and happy be!

THE POOR MAN'S DEATH-BED.

The Winter floods frae bank to brae
Gaed roaring to the sea,
When a weary man of toil cam' hame,
And laid him down to dee.
And lowly was his bed of strae,
And humble was his fare,
But high and strong his honest heart—
Nor wish'd he to ha'e mair!

His bonnie bairns, sae fair and young,
Around his bed they sat,
And their wae mother held his head,
And lang and sair she grat.
"Why greet ye, wife?" said that poor man—
"Why greet ye, bairns, for me?
If frae this toilsome world I win,
Rejoicing ye should be.

"I've kept a house aboon my head
This thirty years and mair,
And tried to haud the honest way
By toils and struggles sair.
And God look'd down, and God did see
The waes the poor maun dree,
And sent an angel frae aboon
To come and ca' for me!

"O greet na, wife, though lang we've been
As twa fond hearts should be;
For though I gang to Heaven first,
Ye soon will follow me.
And God, who minds the lintie young,
And gars the lily grow,
Will care for you and our wee bairns,
And gi'e ye love enow.

"Lang toil is coming on my bairns—
Toil sair and sad, like mine;
But keep a high and sturdy heart,
And never weakly pine.
Your father had an honest name,
And be ye honest too;
What's fause ne'er say for living man—
What's evil dinna do!

"My toil, and cauld, and hunger sair,
Are wellnigh past and done;

Your toil, and cauld, and hunger, dears,
Are barely yet begun.
But live, like brothers, lovingly,
And honest-hearted dee;
And syne, where I am gaun to dwell,
My bairns will come to me.

"The blast blaws chill—I'm waxing faint—
And when I'm ta'en awa,
Be to your mother, comforts, hopes,
And joys and loves an' a'.
Your father's dying counsels from
Your bosoms never tine;
And if you live as he has lived,
Your deaths will be like mine!"

The pious poor man sleeps at length,
Where pains and toils are o'er;
The bitter wind—the hunger fiend—
Can torture him no more.
That land hath something to amend,
And much to prize and bless,
Where poor men suffer and endure,
Whose death-beds are like this.

THE CAIRN.

No chieftain of the olden time
  Beneath this cairn doth lie,
And yet it hath a legend sad—
  A fireside tragedy.

A Highland mother and her child,
  Upon a winter day,
Went forth, to beg their needful food
  A long and weary way!

The bitter wind blew stormily,
  And frozen was each rill;
And all the glens with drifted snow
  Were filled from hill to hill!

The day went past, the night came down,
  And in her hut was mourning,
And sad, young eyes look'd from the door—
  But she was not returning.

"And where is she?" her children said:
  "Why lingers she away?"
The snow-storm's howl did answer make
  Upon the muirland gray!

They sought her east—they sought her west—
They sought her everywhere;
They search'd the folds and shielings lone
Among the hills so bare.

The Highland mother was not found,
Nor yet her fair-hair'd child;
And superstition whisper'd low,
Of spirits in the wild!

The breath of Spring came on the hills,
And dyed their mantle blue;
And greenness came upon the grass,
And scarlet heath-flowers too!

The shepherds wandering o'er the hills,
And in this valley wild,
Calm, as in softest sleep, they found
The mother and her child!

There lay the babe upon the breast
That had the infant nurs'd;
A mother's love that bosom fill'd
When death that bosom burst.

The daisies sweet, and lone, and pure,
Were growing round the pair;
And shepherds o'er the victims rear'd
This mossy cairn there!

A humble tale, and unadorn'd,
It is of humble woe;
But he who heeds not such may turn,
And, if it likes him, go!

I DARE NOT SCORN.

I may not scorn the meanest thing
That on the earth doth crawl,
The slave who dares not burst his chain,
The tyrant in his hall.

The vile oppressor who hath made
The widow'd mother mourn,
Though worthless, soulless, he may stand—
I cannot, *dare* not scorn.

The darkest night that shrouds the sky
Of beauty hath a share;
The blackest heart hath signs to tell
That GOD still lingers there.

I pity all that evil are—
I pity and I mourn;
But the SUPREME hath fashion'd all,
And, oh! I *dare* not scorn.

THE PEOPLE'S ANTHEM.

LORD, from thy blessed throne,
Sorrow look down upon!
GOD save the Poor!
Teach them true Liberty—
Make them from tyrants free—
Let their homes happy be!
GOD save the Poor!

The arms of wicked men
Do THOU with might restrain—
GOD save the Poor!
Raise THOU their lowliness—
Succour THOU their distress—
THOU whom the meanest bless!
GOD save the Poor!

Give them stanch honesty—
Let their pride manly be—
GOD save the Poor!
Help them to hold the right;
Give them both truth and might,
LORD of all LIFE and LIGHT!
GOD save the Poor!

VISIONS.

"My hand is strong, my heart is bold,
My purpose stern," I said;
"And shall I rest till I have wreath'd
Fame's garland round my head?
No! men shall point to me, and say,
'See what the bold can do!'"
"You dream!" a chilling Whisper said;
And quick the vision flew.

"Yes, I will gain," I musing thought,
"Power, pomp, and potency;
Whate'er the proudest may have been,
That straightway will I be.
I'll write my name on human hearts
So deep, 't will ne'er decay!"
"You dream!" and as the Whisper spoke,
My vision fled away.

"I'm poor," I said; "but I will toil
And gather store of gold;
And in my purse the fate of kings
And nations I will hold:
I'll follow Fortune, till my path
With wealth untold she strew!"
Again, "You dream!" the Whisper said,
And straight my vision flew.

"I'll breathe to men," I proudly thought,
"A strain of poesy,
Like the angelic songs of old,
In fire and energy.
My thoughts the thoughts of many lands,
Of many men shall grow;"
"You dream!" the Whisper scorning said—
I dared not answer, No.

If I can gain nor name nor power,
Nor gold, by high emprise,
Bread to the hungry I will give,
And dry the orphan's eyes:
Through me the Sun of Joy shall find
Its way to Sorrow's door:
"The wildest dream of all," then said
The Whisper—"You are poor!"

"I'm poor, unheeded; but I'll be
An honest man," I said;
"Truth I shall worship, yea, and feel
For all whom God hath made:—
The Poor and Honest Man can stand,
With an unblenching brow,
Before Earth's highest,—such I'll be:"—
The Whisper spoke not now!

THE QUESTIONER.

A CHANT.

I ask not for his lineage,
  I ask not for his name—
If manliness be in his heart,
  He noble birth may claim.
I care not though of world's wealth
  But slender be his part,
If Yes you answer, when I ask—
  Hath he a true man's heart?

I ask not from what land he came,
  Nor where his youth was nurs'd—
If pure the stream, it matters not
  The spot from whence it burst.
The palace or the hovel,
  Where first his life began,
I seek not of; but answer this—
  Is he an honest man?

Nay, blush not now—what matters it
  Where first he drew his breath?
A manger was the cradle-bed
  Of HIM of Nazareth!
Be nought, be any, every thing—
  I care not what you be—
If Yes you answer, when I ask—
  Art thou pure, true, and free?

PART IV.

SERIOUS AND PATHETIC POEMS.

THOUGHTS OF HEAVEN.

High thoughts!
They come and go,
Like the soft breathings of a list'ning maiden,
While round me flow
The winds, from woods and fields with gladness laden:
When the corn's rustle on the ear doth come—
When the eve's beetle sounds its drowsy hum—
When the stars, dew-drops of the summer sky,
Watch over all with soft and loving eye—
While the leaves quiver
By the lone river,
And the quiet heart
From depths doth call
And garners all—
Earth grows a shadow
Forgotten whole,
And Heaven lives
In the blessed soul!

High thoughts!
They are with me
When, deep within the bosom of the forest,
Thy morning melody
Abroad into the sky, thou, Throstle, pourest.
When the young sunbeams glance among the trees—
When on the ear comes the soft song of bees—
When every branch has its own favourite bird
And songs of summer, from each thicket heard!—
Where the owl flitteth,
Where the roe sitteth,
And holiness
Seems sleeping there;
While Nature's prayer
Goes up to heaven
In purity,
Till all is glory
And joy to me!

High thoughts!
They are my own
When I am resting on a mountain's bosom,
And see below me strown
The huts and homes where humble virtues blossom;
When I can trace each streamlet through the meadow—
When I can follow every fitful shadow—
When I can watch the winds among the corn,
And see the waves along the forest borne;

Where blue-bell and heather
Are blooming together,
And far doth come
The Sabbath bell,
O'er wood and fell;
I hear the beating
Of Nature's heart:
Heaven is before me—
God! Thou art!

High thoughts!
They visit us
In moments when the soul is dim and darken'd;
They come to bless,
After the vanities to which we hearken'd:
When weariness hath come upon the spirit—
(Those hours of darkness which we all inherit)—
Bursts there not through a glint of warm sunshine,
A winged thought, which bids us not repine?
In joy and gladness,
In mirth and sadness,
Come signs and tokens;
Life's angel brings,
Upon its wings,
Those bright communings
The soul doth keep—
Those thoughts of Heaven
So pure and deep!

AROUSE THEE, SOUL!

AROUSE thee, Soul!
GOD made not thee to sleep
Thy hour of earth, in doing nought,—away;
HE gave thee power to keep.
O! use it for HIS glory, while you may.
Arouse thee, Soul!

Arouse thee, Soul!
O! there is much to do
For thee, if thou wouldst work for humankind—
The misty Future through,
A greatness looms—'tis MIND, awaken'd MIND!
Arouse thee, Soul!

Arouse thee, Soul!
Shake off thy sluggishness,
As shakes the lark the dew-drop from its wing;
Make but *one* Error less,—
One Truth—thine offering to MIND'S altar bring!
Arouse thee, Soul!

Arouse thee, Soul!
Be what thou surely art,
An emanation from the Deity,
A flutter of that heart
Which fills all Nature, sea, and earth, and sky.
Arouse thee, Soul!

Arouse thee, Soul!
And let the body do
Some worthy deed for human happiness
To join, when life is through,
Unto thy name, that angels both may bless!
Arouse thee, Soul!

Arouse thee, Soul!
Leave nothings of the earth;—
And, if the body be not strong, to dare
To blessed thoughts give birth,
High as yon Heaven, pure as Heaven's air,
Arouse thee, Soul!

Arouse thee, Soul!
Or sleep for evermore,
And be what all nonentities have been,—
Crawl on till life is o'er:
If to be ought but this thou e'er dost mean,
Arouse thee, Soul!

THE HERD LASSIE.

I'm fatherless and motherless,
There 's nane on earth to care for me;
And sair and meikle are the waes
That in the warld I maun dree.

For I maun work a stranger's wark,
And sit beside a stranger's fire;
And cauld and hunger I maun thole
From day to day, and never tire!

And I maun herd frae morn to e'en,
Though sleety rain upon me fa';
And never murmur or complein—
And be at ilka body's ca'.
I needna deck my gowden hair,
Nor make mysel' so fair to see;
For I'm an orphan lassie poor—
And wha would look or care for me?

The lave ha'e mothers good and kind,
And joyfu' is ilk daughter's heart;
The lave ha'e brothers stieve and strang,
To haud ilk loving sister's part.
But I'm a poor man's orphan bairn,
And to the ground I laigh maun bow;
And were it nae a sinfu' wish,
Oh, I could wish the world through!

The caller summer morning brings
Some joy to this wae heart o' mine;
But I the joy of life would leave,
If I could wi' it sorrow tine.
My mother said, in Heaven's bliss
E'en puir herd lassies had a share:
I wish I were where mother is—
Her orphan then would greet nae mair!

I AM BLIND.

THE woodland! O! how beautiful,
How pleasant it must be!
How soft its grass—how fresh the leaves
Upon each forest-tree!
I hear its wild rejoicing birds
Their songs of gladness sing;
To see them leap from bough to bough
Must be a pleasant thing:
I must but image it in mind,
I cannot see it—I am blind!

I feel the fragrance of the flowers,—
Go, pull me one, I pray:
The leaves are green upon its stalk—
'Tis richly red you say?
O! it must full of beauty be—
It hath a pleasant smell;
Could I but see its loveliness
My heart with joy would swell!
I can but image it in mind—
I ne'er shall see it—I am blind!

The trees are glorious green, you say—
Their branches widely spread;
And Nature on their budding leaves
Its nursing dew hath shed.

They must be fair; but what is green?
What is a spreading tree?
What is a shady woodland walk?
Say, canst thou answer me?
No! I may image them in mind,
But cannot know them—I am blind!

The songsters that so sweetly chant
Within the sky so fair,
Until my heart with joy doth leap,
As it a wild bird were—
How seem they to the light-bless'd eye?
What! are they then so small?
Can sounds of such surpassing joy
From things so tiny fall?
I must but image them in mind—
I cannot see them—I am blind!

A something warm comes o'er my hand;
What is it? pray thee tell:
Sunlight come down among the trees
Into this narrow dell?
Thou seest the sunlight and the sun,
And both are very bright!
'Tis well they are not known to me,
Or I might loathe my night:
But I may image them in mind—
I ne'er shall see them—I am blind!

My hand is resting on your cheek—
'Tis soft as fleecy snow:

My sister, art thou very fair?
That thou art good, I know.
Thou art—thou art! I feel the blush
Along thy neck doth wend!
Thou must be fair—so carefully
Thy brother thou dost tend!
But I must image thee in mind—
I cannot see *thee*—I am blind!

The changes of the earth and sky—
All Nature's glow and gloom—
Must ever be unknown to me—
My soul is in a tomb!
O! I can feel the blessed sun,
Mirth, music, tears that fall,
And darkness sad, and joy, and woe,—
Yea, Nature's movements all:
But I must image them in mind—
I cannot see *them*—I AM BLIND!

WILD FLOWERS.

BEAUTIFUL children of the woods and fields!
That bloom by mountain streamlets 'mid the heather,
Or into clusters, 'neath the hazels, gather,—
Or where by hoary rocks you make your bields,
And sweetly flourish on through summer weather,—
I love ye all!

Beautiful flowers! to me ye fresher seem
From the Almighty hand that fashion'd all,
Than those that flourish by a garden-wall;
And I can image you, as in a dream,
Fair, modest maidens, nursed in hamlets small,—
I love ye all!

Beautiful gems! that on the brow of earth
Are fix'd, as in a queenly diadem;
Though lowly ye, and most without a name,
Young hearts rejoice to see your buds come forth,
As light erewhile into the world came,—
I love ye all!

Beautiful things ye are, where'er ye grow!
The wild red rose—the speedwell's peeping eyes—
Our own bluebell—the daisy, that doth rise
Wherever sunbeams fall or winds do blow;
And thousands more, of blessed forms and dyes,—
I love ye all!

Beautiful nurslings of the early dew!
Fann'd, in your loveliness, by every breeze,
And shaded o'er by green and arching trees:
I often wish that I were one of you,
Dwelling afar upon the grassy leas,—
I love ye all!

Beautiful watchers! day and night ye wake!
The Evening Star grows dim and fades away,
And Morning comes and goes, and then the Day

Within the arms of Night its rest doth take;
But ye are watchful wheresoe'er we stray,—
I love ye all!

Beautiful objects of the wild-bee's love!
The wild-bird joys your opening bloom to see,
And in your native woods and wilds to be.
All hearts, to Nature true, ye strangely move;
Ye are so passing fair—so passing free,—
I love ye all!

Beautiful children of the glen and dell—
The dingle deep—the moorland stretching wide,
And of the mossy fountain's sedgy side!
Ye o'er my heart have thrown a lovesome spell;
And, though the Worldling, scorning, may deride,—
I love ye all!

THE ANEMONE.

When Autumn winds blaw cauld and chill,
Why droop ye, flowerie, sae?
Why leave us for your winter cell,
Sweet, wild Anemone?

Dost think our hearts refuse to prize
The things we see alway?
To see thee is to love thee well,
Sweet, wild Anemone!

Why need ye fear the bitter wind
That through the woods doth gae?
Its heart is cold, but thee 't would spare,
Sweet, wild Anemone!

A fit ensample thou mightst take
The hopping robin frae—
The emblem pure of Constancy,
Sweet, wild Anemone!

If winter fields be cauld and bare—
If winter skies be blae—
The mair we need thy bonnie face,
Sweet, wild Anemone!

But so it is; and when away
For dreary months you be,
The joy of meeting pays for all,
Sweet, wild Anenome!

TIME'S CHANGES.

Like mist upon the lea,
And like night upon the plain,
Auld age comes o'er the heart
Wi' dolour and wi' pain.
Blithe youth is like a smile,
Sae mirthfu' and sae brief;

Syne wrinkles on the cheek
Come like frost upon the leaf.

O! were I young again,
Were my heart as glad and free,
And were my foot as firm
As it was wont to be,—
I would in youth rejoice
Mair than I yet ha'e done:
'Tis a happy, happy time,
But it passes unco soon.

Frae a distant stranger land
I came to sit again
In the hame that shelter'd me
Ere I sail'd across the main:
But its wa's were lying low,
And the bonnie tree that grew
By that couthie hamestead's door,
Like mysel', was wither'd now.

I sought my youthfu' friend,—
His heart was deadly cauld:
He had lost the gamesome glee
O' the merry days of auld.
He took my offer'd hand,
But he scarcely rais'd his e'e;
And a chill came o'er my heart—
There was nae place there for me.

I sought a maiden's hame
Whom I had loved in youth;
But nae maiden now was there—
She had slighted love and truth:
I fand her wi' the bairn
Of anither on her knee;
And I turn'd and cam' awa'
Wi' a tear-drap in my e'e.

When my brother's ha' I sought—
Wha had sleepit on my breast
When we baith were bairnies young—
I found he was at rest:
And my sisters, dearly loved,
Were awa' amang the lave,
Aneath the chilly mools
In a cauld but peacefu' grave.

I sought the broomy howes,
Where I was wont to gang
When the flowers were buskit a'—
When the summer days were lang:
But as I sat me down
Beside the water-fa',
A shadow as of age
Grew dark upon them a'.

A spreading tree was there,
Which I in youth had set

Beside the gowany green,
Where the neebor bairns met.
There were bees on ilka bud,
And birds on ilka spray,
And its leafy head was green,
While mine was frosted gray.

The burnie blithely ran,
And the lintie lilted sweet—
The laverock was on hie;
But mourning I did greet:
For I fand I couldna lo'e
What I lo'ed a mirthfu' boy;
As the heart that dwells in pain
Grows without a wish for joy.

It wasna like the time
When, singing, I ha'e run
Where the bluebell and the breckan
Lay becking in the sun;
Or, to catch the glancing trout,
Ha'e waded in the burn,
While my blue-e'ed neebor lassie
My father's kye would turn.

I thought the hills were changed—
The brown and bonnie hills;
And the woods, sae fu' o' sang,
And the wimplin' mountain rills:

But nae years could alter them,
Sae the thought was vanitie;
And my bosom whisper'd laigh,
"The change is a' in thee."

I sought the nameless grave
Where my mother's banes did lie—
Where the lips that pray'd for me
Were dust and ashes dry:
I thought that kirkyard mould
Might on me pity take;
But the very grave was gane—
O! my heart is like to break.

And I am sitting now
Upon the kirkyard wa',
And gloamin's ghostly veil
Upon the earth doth fa'.
The cloud o' night is mirk;
But there's darker gloom on me—
The gloom o' friendless hearts:
For tears I canna see.

My auld een winna greet,
When their day o' life is past;
For the wishes o' my heart
Are ayont the world cast:
My feet are in the grave,
And I'm sinking slowly down;

And the grass will shortly grow
My weary head aboon.

Oh, were that moment come!
Oh, were that moment gane!
Oh, were the spirit flown
Frae this mortal flesh and bane!
Were my coffin in the yird,
And my soul to God awa',
I, worshipping, would say,
"May Thou be bless'd for a'!"

THE FORSAKEN.

THE rowing waves, the ocean tides,
Are changefu' baith at e'en and morn,—
Like sunshine and its following shade
Upon the dew-wet, yellow corn:
The burn sings saftly o'er the lea,
Where ance it like a torrent ran;
But a' are steadfastness itsel'
When liken'd to the heart o' man.

Ane sought my love, when in my teens,
A thoughtless lassie, I was gay;
I trusted, as a woman trusts,
And made his love my bosom's stay;

And when, to gather gowd, he gaed
To some far land ayont the main,
I lang'd at e'en, I lang'd at morn,
To see my lov'd one back again.

I ne'er gaed near the youngsters' dance;
But, when the light o' day grew dim,
I sought the broomy trysting knowe,
Where quietness dwelt, to think on him.
Years cam' an' gaed; but hame to me
He hied na, as he should ha'e done:
But, O! I ne'er mistrusted him—
His name I cherish'd late an' soon.

My father and my mother baith
Were laid aneath the cauldrife yird,
And I was left alane, alane,
A mourning and a mateless bird.
He came at length,—and O! my heart
Was glad as heart can ever be,—
He cam' wi' a' his treasured love,
He came to gi'e it a' to me.

I heard his foot on my door-stane—
He stood upon my lanely floor—
I gazed upon the manly form
That did my lassie's heart allure;
And bitter thoughts came in my breast;
For Pride was dancing in the e'e

Whence Love should ha'e been smiling sweet
To bless, and glad, and comfort me.

I saw his glance o' meikle scorn
Upon my lanely maiden hame;
And O! I thought my heart wad break
While laigh I murmur'd forth his name.
He gazed upon my alter'd form,—
I kent what in his e'e did gleam:—
He thought na, in his cruelty,
The change was wrought by waiting him.

He cauldly spake o' youthfu' days;
And o' his plighted faith spake he;
And syne I scorn'd the world's slave,
And proudly told him he was free.
He turn'd him wi' a mocking smile,
And offer'd gowd and offer'd gear:
And *then* I sought in vain to dee,—
For *this* I cou'dna, cou'dna bear.

Truth, Love, and Woman's Faith, in youth,
A dwellin' place had biggit me,—
A hame where Joy upon my heart
Had blinkit sunshine wondrouslie;
But Falsehood came, and to the earth
That Palace o' the Soul did fa':
For Woman's Trustin' Faith was gane,
And Truth and Love were far awa'.

I bared my breast beneath a ray
  Sent frae Love's bonnie Simmer sun;
But, ere I wist, cauld Winter cam',
  And Hope and Joy gaed one by one.
I maybe loved a thing o' earth
  O'er weel, and Heaven burst the chain;—
I ken na; but my heart is sair,
  And Age is comin' cauld and lane!

A THOUGHT.

Yon sail on the horizon's verge
  Doth like a wandering spirit seem,—
A shadow in a sea of light—
  The passing of a dream.

A moment more and it is gone!
  We know not how—we know not where;
It came—an instant staid—and then
  It vanish'd into air.

Such are we all: we sail awhile
  In joy, on life's fair summer sea;
A moment—and our bark is gone
  Into Eternity.

THE THOUGHT SPIRIT.

WHENCE comest thou?
Far, far away,
I have chased the shadows of morning gray;
Up through the mists where the stars are shining,
Like the Blest, in their homes of light reclining—
Away through the wilds of immensity,
Where man is afar, and where God is nigh,
I have looked at the things which thou shalt see
When the earth-bound spirit is soaring free!

Whence comest thou?
I have wandered far,
Where the graves of the Patriot Martyrs are:
I have knelt 'mid the leaves of the forest-land—
By the graves of the Pilgrim Fathers' band;
Within their forests, beneath their trees,
I have breath'd a prayer to the midnight breeze,—
A prayer for a heart like the mighty and free,
Whose lives were a Gospel of Liberty!

Whence comest thou?
I have wandered free,
With the fearless bark, o'er the cold north sea;
I have swung in the hammock and heard the tale,
And followed the ship through storm and gale,

Till I sunk in the wave where the tempest sweeps,
Then I turned to the home where the mother weeps,—
Where the wife and the orphan sigh and mourn
For the brave and the bold who will ne'er return!

Whence comest thou?
'Neath a tropic sky,
I have laid me down a sweet streamlet nigh;
And that sunny land was so sweet and fair,
That I longed to recline for ever there;
But man came near; and his soul was dark,
God's image defiled with the Tyrant's mark;
The sterile land is the land for me,
If man is mighty, and thought be free!

FOREST MUSINGS.

The green leaves waving in the morning gale—
The little birds that 'mid their freshness sing—
The wild-wood flowers so tender-ey'd and pale—
The wood-mouse sitting by the forest spring—
The morning dew—the wild bee's woodland hum,
All woo my feet to Nature's forest home.

'Tis beautiful, from some tall craggy peak
To watch the setting of the blessed sun—
To mark his light grow weaker, and more weak,
Till earth and sky be hid in twilight dun;

'Tis beautiful to watch the earliest ray,
That sparkling comes across the ocean gray.

But, oh! more beautiful—more passing sweet
It is, to wander in an hour like this—
Where twisted branches overhead do meet,
And gentle airs the bursting buds do kiss—
Where forest-paths, and glades, and thickets green,
Make up, of flowers and leaves, a world serene.

To the pure heart, 't is happiness to mark
The tree-tops waving in the warm sunshine—
To hear thy song, thou cloud-embosom'd lark,
Like that of some fair spirit all divine—
To lie upon the forest's velvet grass,
And watch the fearful deer in distance pass.

O! gloriously beautiful is earth!—
The desert wild, the mountain old and hoar,
The craggy steep, upthrown at Nature's birth,
The sweeping ocean wave, the pebbled shore,
Have much of beauty all; but none to me
Is like the spot where stands the forest-tree.

There I can muse, away from living men,
Reclining peacefully on Nature's breast,—
The woodbird sending up its GOD-ward strain,
Nursing the spirit into holy rest!
Alone with GOD, within *his* forest fane,
The soul can feel that all save HIM is vain.

Here it can learn—*will* learn—to love all things
That He hath made—to pity and forgive
All faults, all failings: Hear the heart's deep springs
Are open'd up, and all on earth who live
To me grow nearer, dearer than before—
My brother loving I my God adore.

A deep mysterious sympathy doth bind
The human heart to Nature's beauties all;
We know not, guess not, of its force or kind;
But that *it is* we know. When ill doth fall
Upon us—when our hearts are sear'd and riven—
We'll seek the forest land for peace and Heaven.

THE SICK CHILD'S DREAM.

O! mither, mither, my head was sair,
And my een wi' tears were weet;
But the pain has gane for evermair,
Sae mither dinna greet:
And I ha'e had sic a bonnie dream,
Since last asleep I fell,
O' a' that is holy an' gude to name,
That I've wauken'd my dream to tell.

I thought on the morn o' a simmer day
That awa' through the clouds I flew,

While my silken hair did wavin' play
'Mang breezes steep'd in dew;
And the happy things o' life and light
Were around my gowden way,
As they stood in their parent Heaven's sight
In the hames o' nightless day.

An' sangs o' love that nae tongue may tell,
Frae their hearts cam' flowin' free,
Till the starns stood still, while alang did swell
The plaintive melodie;
And ane o' them sang wi' my mither's voice,
Till through my heart did gae
That chanted hymn o' my bairnhood's choice,
Sae dowie, saft, an' wae.

Thae happy things o' the glorious sky
Did lead me far away,
Where the stream o' life rins never dry,
Where nathing kens decay;
And they laid me down in a mossy bed,
Wi' curtains o' spring leaves green,
And the name o' GOD they praying said,
And a light came o'er my een.

And I saw the earth that I had left,
And I saw my mither there;
And I saw her grieve that she was bereft
O' the bairn she thought sae fair;

And I saw her pine till her spirit fled—
  Like a bird to its young ane's nest—
To that land of love; and my head was laid
  Again on my mither's breast.

And, mither, ye took me by the hand,
  As ye were wont to do;
And your loof, sae saft and white, I fand
  Laid on my caller brow;
And my lips you kiss'd, and my curling hair
  You round your fingers wreath'd;
And I kent that a happy mither's prayer
  Was o'er me silent breath'd;

And we wander'd through that happy land,
  That was gladly glorious a';
The dwellers there were an angel-band,
  And their voices o' love did fa'
On our ravish'd ears like the deein' tones
  O' an anthem far away,
In a starn-lit hour, when the woodland moans
  That its green is turn'd to gray.

And, mither, amang the sorrowless there,
  We met my brithers three,
And your bonnie May, my sister fair,
  And a happy bairn was she;
And she led me awa' 'mang living flowers,
  As on earth she aft has done;

And thegither we sat in the holy bowers
Where the blesséd rest aboon :—

And she tauld me I was in Paradise,
Where God in love doth dwell—
Where the weary rest, and the mourner's voice
Forgets its warld-wail ;
And she tauld me they kent na dule nor care ;
And bade me be glad to dee,
That yon sinless land and the dwellers there
Might be hame and kin to me.

Then sweetly a voice came on my ears,
And it sounded sae holily,
That my heart grew saft, and blabs o' tears
Sprung up in my sleepin' e'e ;
And my inmost soul was sairly moved
Wi' its mair than mortal joy ;—
'Twas the voice o' Him wha bairnies lov'd
That wauken'd your dreamin' boy !

THE MOTHER.

There's a tear within my e'e, lassie—
A sorrow in my heart ;
And I canna smile on thee,
Though dear to me thou art.

My mither 's dead an' gane,
An' I am lanely now;
An' the friendless there is nane
To love, save God an' you.

My mither 's dead an' gane;
She has been a' to me:—
O! I wish when we are ane
I may be sae to thee.

'Mang cauld an' hunger's waes
She nurtured me wi' care;
An' to gi'e me meat an' claes
She toil'd baith lang and sair.

She toil'd an' ne'er thought lang,
An' keepit hersel' fu' cauld,
That I might couthie gang
When winter winds were bauld.

She liv'd for Heaven's land,
An' gude she gart me lo'e;
An' she tauld me aye to stand
Wi' the faithfu' an' the true.

She lived in povertie—
A widow lane was she;
But her deein' words to me
Were, "Haud by honestie."

The puir maun joy resign—
A puir man's wife was she;
An', like her, when thou art mine
A puir man's bride thou'lt be.

We ha'e love, but naething mair;
An' if frae thee I'm ta'en,
Thou'lt ha'e to struggle sair,
Like her that's dead an' gane.

Thou'lt ha'e to struggle sair,
To nurture men like me;
Baith toil an' scorn to bear—
The puir folk's destinie.

But there comes a restin' day—
She's soundly sleepin' now;
The joyfu' an' the wae
Are ane when life is through!

THE BEREAVED.

THEY'RE a' gane thegither, Jeanie—
They're a gane thegither:
Our bairns aneath the cauldrife yird
Are laid wi' ane anither.

Sax lads and lasses Death has ta'en
  Frae father an' frae mither;
But O! we mauna greet and mane—
  They're a' on hie thegither, Jeanie—
  They're a' on hie thegither.

Our eild will now be drearie, Jeanie—
  Our eild will now be drearie:
Our young an' bonnie bairns ha'e gane,
  An' left our hame fu' eerie.
'Neath Age's hand we now may grane—
  In poortith cauld may swither:
The things that toddled but an' ben
  Are a' on hie thegither, Jeanie—
  Are a' on hie thegither.

Now sorrow may come near us, Jeanie—
  Now sorrow may come near us:
The buirdly chields are lyin' low
  Wha wadna let it steer us.
The bonnie lasses are awa'
  Wha came like sun-glints hither,
To fill wi' joy their father's ha'—
  They're a' on hie thegither, Jeanie—
  They're a' on hie thegither.

In the kirkyard they're sleepin', Jeanie—
  In the kirkyard they're sleepin':
It maybe grieves their happy souls
  To see their parents weepin'.

They're on to bigg a hame for us,
Where flowers like them ne'er wither,
Amang the starns in love an' bliss—
They're a' on hie thegither, Jeanie—
They're a' on hie thegither.

THE PARTING.

My heart is sad and wae, mither,
To leave my native land—
Its bonnie glens—its hills sae blue—
Its memory-hallow'd strand—
The friends I've lo'ed sae lang and weel—
The hearts that feel for me:
But, mither, mair than a' I grieve
At leavin' thee.

The hand that saft my bed has made
When I was sick and sair,
Will carefully my pillow lay
And haud my head nae mair.
The een that sleeplessly could watch
When I was in my pain,
Will ne'er for me, from night to dawn,
E'er wake again.

There 's kindness in the warld, mither,
An' kindness I will meet;

But nane can be what thou hast been—
  Nane's praise can be sae sweet;
Nae ither e'er can love thy son
  Wi' love akin to thine—
An' nane can love thee, mither dear,
  Wi' love like mine.

I 'll keep thee in my inmost soul
  Until the day I dee;
For saft, saft is my mither's hand,
  An' kindly is her e'e;
An' when GOD-sent spirits far away
  To him my soul shall bear,
My deepest joy will be to meet
  My mither there.

THE GRAVE OF BURNS.

BY a kirkyard-yett I stood, while many enter'd in,
Men bow'd wi' toil an' age—wi' haffets auld an' thin;
An' ithers in their prime, wi' a bearin' proud an' hie;
An' maidens, pure an' bonnie as the daisies o' the lea;
An' matrons wrinkled auld, wi' lyart heads an' gray;
An' bairns, like things o'er fair for Death to wede away.

I stood beside the yett, while onward still they went,—
The laird frae out his ha', an' the shepherd frae the bent:

It seem'd a type o' men, an' o' the grave's domain;
But these were livin' a', an' could straight come forth again.
An' of the bedral auld, wi' meikle courtesie,
I speer'd what it might mean? an' he bade me look an' see.

On the trodden path that led to the house of worshipping,
Or before its open doors, there stood nae livin' thing;
But awa' amang the tombs, ilk comer quickly pass'd,
An' upon ae lowly grave ilk seekin' e'e was cast.
There were sabbin' bosoms there, and proud yet soften'd eyes,
An' a whisper breathed around, "There the loved and honour'd lies."

There was ne'er a murmur there—the deep-drawn breath was hush'd,—
And o'er the maiden's cheek the tears o' feelin' gush'd;
An' the bonnie infant face was lifted as in prayer;
An' manhood's cheek was flush'd wi' the thoughts that movin' were:
I stood beside the grave, and I gazed upon the stone,
And the name of "ROBERT BURNS" was engraven thereupon.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.

God's lowly temple! place of many prayers!
Gray is thy roof, and crumbling are thy walls;
And over old green graves thy shadow falls,
To bless the spot where end all human cares!

The sight of thee brings gladness to my heart;
And while beneath thy humble roof I stand,
I seem to grasp an old familiar hand,
And hear a voice that bids my spirit start.

Long years ago, in childhood's careless hour,
Thou wast to me e'en like a grandsire's knee—
From storms a shelter thou wast made to be—
I bound my brow with ivy from thy tower.

The humble-hearted, and the meek and pure
Have, by the holy worship of long years,
Made thee a hallowed place; and many tears,
Shed in repentance deep, have blessed thy floor.

Like some all-loving good man's feeling heart,
Thy portal hath been opened unto all;
A treasure-house where men, or great or small,
May bring their purest, holiest thoughts, thou art!

Church of the Village! God doth not despise
The torrent's voice, in mountain valleys dim,
Nor yet the blackbird's summer morning hymn;
And HE will hear the prayers from thee that rise.

The father loves thee, for his son is laid
Among thy graves; the mother loves thee too,
For 'neath thy roof, by love time-tried and true,
Her quiet heart long since was happy made.

The wanderer in a far and foreign land,
When death's last sickness o'er him revels free,
Turns his heart homewards, even unto thee,
And those who, weekly, 'neath thy roof-tree stand.

Lowly thou art; but yet, when time is set,
Will He who loves what wicked men despise—
Who hears the orphan's voice, that up doth rise
In deep sincerity—not thee forget!

Lone temple! did men know it—unto thee
Would pilgrims come, more than to battle plains;
For thou hast lightened human woes and pains,
And taught men's souls the truth that makes them free!

The distant sound of thy sweet Sabbath bell
O'er meadows green no more shall come to me,
Sitting beneath the lonely forest tree—
Church of my native Village! fare-thee-well!

A DIRGE.

Sleep on, sleep on, ye resting dead;
The grass is o'er ye growing
In dewy greenness. Ever fled
From you hath Care; and, in its stead,
Peace hath with you its dwelling made,
Where tears do cease from flowing.
Sleep on!

Sleep on, sleep on: Ye do not feel
Life's ever-burning fever—
Nor scorn that sears, nor pains that steel
And blanch the loving heart, until
'Tis like the bed of mountain-rill
Which waves have left for ever!
Sleep on!

Sleep on, sleep on: Your couch is made
Upon your mother's bosom;
Yea, and your peaceful lonely bed
Is all with sweet wild-flowers inlaid;
And over each earth-pillowed head
The hand of Nature strews them.
Sleep on!

Sleep on, sleep on: I would I were
At rest within your dwelling,—

No more to feel, no more to bear
The World's falsehood and its care—
The arrows it doth never spare
On him whose feet are failing.
Sleep on!

MY AULD GUDEWIFE.

COME in, gudewife, an' sit ye down,
An' let the wark alane:
I'm thinkin' now o' youthfu' days
An' times that lang ha'e gane;
An' o' the monie ups an' downs
In life that we ha'e seen,
Since first aneath the trystin' tree
I clasp'd my bonnie Jean.

How sweetly holy was the hour
When first in love we met!
When first your breast was press'd to mine—
That hour can I forget?
Wi' blessed love our hearts were fu'
Aneath the hawthorn green:
'Twas then our happiness began,
My ain—my bonnie Jean.

Sweet shone the moon aboon our heads
When aff ye gaed wi' me,

And left your father in his sleep
To wake and seek for thee—
Your mither left to flyte and ban
Frae mornin' until e'en,
'Cause he whose poverty she scorn'd
Was aff wi' bonnie Jean.

Our marriage-day was bright and clear—
Our marriage-day was fair:
For diamonds ye did daisies twine
Amang your glossy hair.
I wealthless was at openin' morn;
But at the closin' e'en
I had what mailins couldna buy—
My ain—my bonnie Jean.

An', Jean, our proud friends scorn'd us sair,
And coost their heads fu' hie,—
They couldna ken twa bodies puir,
Like senseless thee and me:
But we had wealth—our hands were good;
And wealth to us they've been;
And love was sunshine over a',
My ain—my bonnie Jean.

And mind ye, Jean, when we began
To gather flocks and gear,
How friends grew up in ilka neuk,
And came baith far and near?—
How we began to gather sense,
An' wise folk grew, I ween,

As aye our wealth grew mair an' mair,
My ain—my bonnie Jean?

And now around us flourish fair,
Baith sons and dochters too:
You're happy in your bairns, gudewife,
And happy I'm in you;
And though your head be growin' gray,
And dimmer be your een,
Than in our days of blithsome youth,
You're aye my bonnie Jean.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE.

A TRODDEN daisy, from the sward,
With tearful eye I took,
And on its ruin'd glories I,
With moving heart, did look;
For, crush'd and broken though it was,
That little flower was fair;
And oh! I loved the dying bud—
For GOD was there!

I stood upon a sea-beat shore—
The waves came rushing on;
The tempest raged in giant wrath—
The light of day was gone.

The sailor, from his drowning bark,
Sent up his dying prayer;
I look'd, amid the ruthless storm,
And GOD was there!

I sought a lonely, woody dell,
Where all things soft and sweet—
Birds, flowers, and trees, and running streams—
'Mid bright sunshine did meet:
I stood beneath an old oak's shade,
And summer round was fair;
I gazed upon the peaceful scene,
And GOD was there!

I saw a home—a happy home—
Upon a bridal day,
And youthful hearts were blithsome there,
And aged hearts were gay:—
I sat amid the smiling band,
Where all so blissful were—
Among the bridal maidens sweet—
And GOD was there!

I stood beside an infant's couch,
When light had left its eye—
I saw the mother's bitter tears,
I heard her woeful cry—
I saw her kiss its fair pale face,
And smooth its yellow hair;
And oh! I loved the Mourner's home,
For GOD was there!

I sought a cheerless wilderness—
A desert, pathless, wild—
Where verdure grew not by the streams,
Where Beauty never smiled;—
Where Desolation brooded o'er
A muirland lone and bare,—
And awe upon my spirit crept,
For GOD was there!

I looked upon the lowly flower,
And on each blade of grass—
Upon the forests, wide and deep;—
I saw the tempests pass:
I gazed on all created things
In earth, in sea, and air;
Then bent the knee—for GOD in Love
Was everywhere!

MY ONLY SISTER.

The wild-flowers, Marg'ret, round thee up are springing,
And sending forth into the summer sky
Their pure hearts' incense. Unto me they seem
Thy guardian angels, ever watching thee,
And praying for thee in sweet Nature's voice
So purely holy!

The light of Love is in thine eye, my sister!
The open smile of Joy is on thy brow,

Thy floating hair falls o'er a little heart
As innocent, as loving, and as pure,
As e'er on earth was lov'd with love like mine—
A brother's love!

Fair as the image of a Poet's musings—
Pure as the dreams of childhood's vision hour—
Thou art to me; for thou dost love me so.
My heart shall never tire of loving thee;
And what the heart doth love grows beautiful
As a pure soul!

I would that I the dusky veil could sever
Which shades the future from my longing sight,
That I might watch thy onward way through life—
That I might know how best to save thy heart
From woe—thy feet from snares—thy eye from tears—
My darling sister!

O! can that silver light which aye is flowing
From watching-stars, as flows unfailingly
A river from its source, which looks upon
Thy childhood's glee—e'er see thee lone with Woe,
A dweller in the dungeon-home of Grief
With none to comfort?

I know not, sister; but if purity
Be ever watching o'er thy virgin soul,
And if thy heart be filled with Steadfastness—

With Trusting Love—with Truth that knows not guile—
Grief may be grievous, but thou'lt sternly bear,
My beautiful!

Who spake of Grief? Can eyes so brightly beaming
With Love, and Hope, and Joy, be fill'd with tears?
There is no heart so hard as do thee wrong,
Thou art so innocent: So brightly trusting
Would be thy smile into the face of Pain,
It could not harm!

My sister! friends may fail, and thy Affections
On Instability may all be laid:
But, in thy hour of loneliness, when those
Thou lovest most have left thee—then through tears
Remember that thy brother's heart and hand
Are ever open!

The love of all may change; but *his!*—O! never
While Time is flowing, nor beyond the Grave.
Dishonour ne'er shall cast its shadow o'er thee
While life is in *his* heart:—Thy head shall rest
For ever on *his* breast, and he will guard thee
As doth thy mother!

A DAY AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

"Come, sit by your father's knee,
My son,
On the seat by your father's door,
And the thoughts of your youthful heart,
My son,
Like a stream of Gladness pour;
For, afar 'mong the lonely hills,
My son,
Since the morning thou hast been;
Now tell me thy bright day-dreams,
My son,—
Yea, all thou hast thought and seen!"

"When morn aboon yon eastern hill
Had raised its glimmering e'e,
I hied me to the heather hills,
Where gorcocks crawing flee;
And ere the laverock sought the lift,
Frae out the dewy dens,
I wandering was by mountain-streams
In lane and hoary glens.

"Auld frowning rocks on either hand,
Uprear'd their heads to Heaven,
Like temple-pillars which the foot
Of Time had crush'd and riven;

And voices frae ilk mossy stane
Upon my ear did flow,—
They spake o' Nature's secrets a'—
The tales o' long ago.

"The daisy, frae the burnie's side,
Was looking up to God—
The crag that crown'd the towering peak
Seem'd kneeling on the sod:
A sound was in ilk dowie glen,
And on ilk naked rock—
On mountain-peak—in valley lone—
And holy words it spoke.

"The nameless flowers that budded up,
Each beauteous desert child,
The heather's scarlet blossoms, spread
O'er many a lanely wild,—
The lambkins, sporting in the glens—
The mountains old and bare—
Seem'd worshipping; and there with them
I breathed my morning prayer.

"Alang, o'er monie a mountain-tap—
Alang, through monie a glen—
Wi' Nature haudin' fellowship,
I journey'd far frae men.
Now suddenly a lonely tarn
Would burst upon my eye,
An' whiles frae out the solitudes
Would come the breezes' cry.

" At noon, I made my grassy couch
Beside a haunted stream,—
A bonnie bloomin' bush o' broom
Waved o'er me in my dream.
I laid me there in slumberous joy
Upon the giant knee
Of yonder peak, that seem'd to bend
In watching over me.

" I dream'd a bonnie bonnie dream,
As sleepin' there I lay:—
I thought I brightly round me saw
The fairy people stray.
I dreamt they back again had come
To live in glen and wold—
To sport in dells 'neath harvest moons—
As in the days of old.

" I saw them dance upo' the breeze,
An' hide within the flower—
Sing bonnie and unearthly sangs,
An' skim the lakelets o'er!
That hour the beings o' the past,
Of ages lost an' gone,
Came back to earth, an' grot an' glen
Were peopled every one!

" The vision fled, and I awoke:—
The sun was sinkin' down;
The mountain-birds frae hazels brown
Had sung their gloamin' tune;

The dew was sleepin' on the leaf,
The breezes on the flower;
And Nature's heart was beating calm,—
It was the evening hour.

"And, father, when the moon arose,
Upon a mountain-height
I stood and saw the brow of earth
Bound wi' its silver light.
Nae sound came on the watching ear
Upon that silent hill;
My e'en were filled with tears, the hour
Sae holy was and still!

"There was a lowly mound o' green
Beside me rising there,—
A pillow where a bairn might kneel,
And say its twilight prayer.
The moonlight kiss'd the gladsome flowers
That o'er that mound did wave;
Then I remember'd that I stood
Beside the Martyrs' grave!

"I knelt upon that hallow'd earth,
While Memory pictured o'er
The changing scenes—the changing thoughts
That day had held in store;
And then my breast wi' gladness swell'd,
And GOD in love did bless,—
HE gave me, 'mong auld Scotland's hills,
A day of happiness!"

THE WIDOW'S CHILD.

You said my lip was red, Mamma;
You said my face was fair;
You said my brow was white, Mamma,
And silken was my hair:
And you ca'd me your infant lassie sweet,
While I sat on the green grass at your feet;
And you said, while laigh was your tearful mane,
I was like my father dead and gane:—
O! I aye would like to be, Mamma,
What thou couldst love fu' weel;
And ever by your knee
Your bairn would like to kneel, Mamma,
Your bairn would like to kneel!

Do you mind the summer day, Mamma,
When through the woods we went—
When the e'enin' sunlight red, Mamma,
Wi' the leaves sae green was blent?—
And ye shawed me the wild-wood birdies a'—
The Lintie green and the Wren sae sma';
And I heard ilk singer chant its sang,
The green green leaves and buds amang:
And, O! their sangs were sweet, Mamma,
And their life was blithe and free;
And there's ane I there did meet
Whilk I would like to be, Mamma,
Whilk I would like to be!

It's no the Lintie green, Mamma,
And it's no the Robin gray;
And it's no the little Wren, Mamma,
Nor the Mavis on the spray;
But, O! it's the bonnie wee Croodlin Doo,
That churm'd its sang where the beeches grew—
Wi' its downy wing and its glossy breast,
And its loving heart, and its forest nest:—
And though my lip be red, Mamma,
And though my face be fair,
I wish my hame were made
Wi' the bonnie Wild Doo there, Mamma,
Wi' the bonnie Wild Doo, there!

If I had the Wild Doo's wing, Mamma,
I far awa' wad flee,
Where my father, whom ye mourn, Mamma,
Is watchin' thee an' me!
An' I would press his lips to mine,
As ye aften press my cheek to thine—
I wad say to him my e'enin' prayer,
An' drop to sleep on his bosom there!
Syne back your wee Croodlin Doo, Mamma,
Wad come to its Mither's hand,
An' tidings bring to you
O' that far an' better land, Mamma,
O' that far an' better land!

THE MOUNTAIN ORPHAN.

A PICTURE of some olden fay—
A fairy in its charmed ring—
A creature all delight and joy—
Is that lone mountain-thing.

Around her widowed mother's home
Among the moors she roameth wild:
Free as their winds—fair as their flowers—
Is that pure joyous child.

Calmly at night she resteth here
Upon her mother's downy knee;
And on her breast she sleepeth sweet—
An orphan infant she.

And up she riseth in the morn,
And o'er the wilds she wanders lone,
And sitteth by their broom-hid streams:
Companions she hath none.

Companions! yes, the grass—the flowers—
The sunlight blithe—the heather brown—
The very moss that on the moors
The wind-beat crags doth crown—

The living stars that gem the sky—
The gales that soothing murmur on—
The golden broom—are unto her
Companions every one!

The grass springs freshly up where she
The long, long summer-day is playing;
The flow'rets nod their heads in joy
Where she is blithely straying.

Yea that old moorland desert wild
That in its hoary age doth rest,
Seems smiling softly while she sits
Upon its rugged breast.

When on the hills that little maid
Is straying while her song she sings,
The gladness of her little heart
Through Nature's silence rings.

The glens and stream-banks are her home,
And Nature is a nurse to her;
The sounds that from her bosom come
Her infant spirit stir.

O'er moor, through glen, by rushy pool,
Untended still she seems to go;
But GOD doth watch that infant's feet
While wandering to and fro.

Sweet moorland child! my heart hath leapt
While gazing on each sunny tress,
Thy glowing face, thy sparkling eyes,
Thy simple happiness.

The joy of hearts that know no guile
Hath shed its glory over thee:
Thou art—what great and wise are not—
As happy as a bee.

Yea, many, who, to gather gold
And hoary wisdom, long have toil'd,
Would wish to be again like thee,
Thou pure and happy child.

The mountain-winds have taught thee joy;
The flowers have taught thee purity;
Love, Hope, and Truth, the lips of earth
Have sweetly taught to thee.

Child of the mountains! may Deceit
Ne'er darken that blithe heart of thine!
May thou aye be a star of love
Upon this earth of ours to shine!

May GOD aye guard thee, infant sweet!
While on the moorlands thou dost tarry,
And keep thee in thy mother's home,
Thou bright young mountain fairy!

THE MOTHER'S MONODY.

O! she was the joy of her father's home—
The light of her mother's eye:
Yet she moulders now in the lonesome grave;
For the pure and good can die.
She was more akin to the Land above
Than the tearful earth below;
And there lives not a fairer spirit now
In the bliss she hath wander'd to.

I saw her bud, like a precious flower,
From infancy to youth,
As fair and pure as the rosy sky
Of the bright and fragrant South;
And I saw her loved in her father's house,
With a love earth ne'er surpass'd:
And I saw Decay, drear, dark, and cold,
O'er her youth its blighting cast.

But O! she murmur'd not to leave
This earth and the dwellers there,
Her parents loved or her sisters young,
With whom she had knelt in prayer:
But she droop'd with a smile upon her brow,
Which meekly seem'd to say,
Why weep ye, mother dear, for me?
It is best to be away!

And she would chant the lovesome songs
She had wont in joy to sing;
Their tones doth yet in her mother's ear
With a woeful cadence ring:
And she would kiss the cheek and lip
Of her sisters, loved so well;
And the joys of yon future Land of Love
To their infant ears would tell.

O! I saw her wither day by day,
And nightly saw her pine;
Yet I could not save—was e'er a lot
So woeful sad as mine?
I saw her grow more beauteous still,
As the day of death came near,
Till my daughter a spotless angel was
Ere she left her dwelling here!

And the last sad glance from her dear dark eye,
On her grieving parents fell;
And she was away to the better Land
She had ever loved so well:
And her sisters wept; and her father's eyes
With tears of grief were full;
But they forgot,—while her mother's heart
Remembers her daughter still!

O! I had hoped that her kindly hand
My dying eyes should close;
That upon my grave she would often sit
Where the grass of the churchyard grows;

And when long, long years had pass'd away,
And her hour of death had come,
That her mother's voice in that better Land
Should welcome her daughter home!

But I am left in this vale of tears,
And she to the Good hath gone;
And my daughter's eye, 'mid her holiness,
My grief is looking on:
And I would weep, for my heart is sore;
But her soul would my sorrow see;
And I dry my tears, and I seek to go,
My Mary, unto thee!

MY LILY.

An modest, winsome, little flower
Within a humble garden grew;
It cheered a lonely woman's hame—
But cauld decay the flower did pu'.
My orphan bairn, my only ane,
Ran round her widowed mother's knee,
And sleepit on her mother's breast;
Yet she is reft awa' frae me!

Fu' meek and gentle was her face,
And sweeter far my lassie's heart;
She wasna made for care or toil—
Her saft, laigh voice, has made me start:

She was my last; but pale she grew—
  Pale as the summer's fading day:
I grat in secret; for I saw
  My Lily fading fast away!

She couldna sleep when winds were bauld,
  And frost was hard upon the yird;
She couldna die till Spring came green,
  And singing was each happy bird.
When flowers were busking everywhere,
  And blackbirds sang in dean and shaw,
Like the last breath of Even's wind
  My Lily faded fast awa'!

And then they tried to comfort me,
  And hard and bitter words they spake,
And said it was a sinfu' thing
  To greet and mane for Lily's sake.
I greet not now—this is her grave—
  Earth has ae pleasure yet for me;
For I can sleep, and I can dream
  That Lily's come again to me.

THE PRIMROSE.

The milk-white blossoms of the thorn
  Are waving o'er the pool,

Moved by the wind that breathes along
So sweetly and so cool.
The hawthorn clusters bloom above,
The primrose hides below,
And on the lonely passer by
A modest glance doth throw!

The humble Primrose' bonnie face
I meet it everywhere;
Where other flowers disdain to bloom
It comes and nestles there.
Like GOD's own light, on every place
In glory it doth fall:
And where its dwelling-place is made,
It straightway hallows all!

Where'er the green-winged linnet sings
The Primrose bloometh lone;
And love it wins—deep love—from all
Who gaze its sweetness on.
On field-paths narrow, and in woods
We meet thee near and far,
Till thou becomest prized and loved,
As things familiar are!

The stars are sweet at eventide,
But cold, and far away;
The clouds are saft in summer time,
But all unstable they:

The rose is rich—but pride of place
Is far too high for me—
God's simple common things I love—
My Primrose, such as thee!

I love the fireside of my home,
Because all sympathies,
The feelings fond of every day,
Around its circle rise.
And while admiring all the flowers
That Summer suns can give,
Within my heart the Primrose sweet,
In lowly love doth live!

THE NAMELESS RIVULET.

We met within a Highland glen—
Where, wandering to and fro
Amid the rushes and the broom,
A pilgrim thou didst go.
Tripping betwixt thy gowany banks
I heard thy tinkling feet,
While with thy solitary voice
The primrose thou didst greet!

Then, nameless stream, I imaged thee
A pure and happy child,
Whose soul is filled with guileless love,
Its brain with fancies wild;

Which wanders 'mid the haunts of men,
Through suffering, care, and fear,
Pouring its waking thoughts and dreams
In Nature's faithful ear!

Like brothers, streamlet, forth we fared,
Upon a July morn,
And left behind us rocky steep,
And mountain wastes forlorn.
Where'er thy murmuring footstep strayed,
Along with thee I went;
Thy haunts were Nature's fanes, and I
Was therewith well content.

Adown by meadows green we roved,
Where children sweet were playing,
We glided through the glens of green,
Where lambkins fair were straying.
We lingered where thy lofty banks
Were clad with bush and tree,
And where the linnet's sweetest song
Was sung to welcome thee.

Then came the forest dark and deep;
As through its shade we went
The leaves and boughs, with foliage bowed,
Were with thy waters blent.
And through the leafy veil the sun
Fell lone, and fitfully,
To kiss thy waves, that from the hills
Came flowing on with me.

And when we left the wild-wood's shade,
From fields of ripened grain
The reapers' song came sweetly down,
And thine replied again.
Away we went by hut and hall,
Away by cottage lone,
Now lingering by a patch of wood,
Now moving heedless on!

Where praying monks had been we passed,
And all was silent there,
Save when thy voice the echoes waked,
Which heard the hermit's prayer.
We passed by thickets green and old,
By craggy rocks so steep,
And o'er leaf-shadow'd waterfalls,
We cheerily did leap!

And then a spot upon us burst,
Where hills on either side
Rose up, all clad in coppice-wood,
Which rock and steep did hide.
The ivy clasp'd each stone and bush
Thou flow'dst along between;
While rock and river, bird and flower,
Filled up the glorious scene.

By happy homes of toiling men,
We this sweet day have passed,
And have enjoyed each sight and sound,
As though it were our last:

And now we loiter lazily
Beneath the setting sun;
My journey ends when starlight comes,
Thine is not well begun!

Now, Highland streamlet, ere we part,
Which didst thou love the best
Of all we've seen since, silently,
We left thy Highland nest?
Lovest thou best the meadow green,
Or Highland valley gray?
Or lovest thou best by hazel braes,
At eventide to stray?

Or dost thou love where forest trees
Thy little waves are laving?
Or wealthy fields, where golden grain,
Ripe, to the sun, is waving?
The rustle of thy fleety foot,
Upon my ear doth fall—
Thou stream, like this full heart of mine,
Dost dearly love them all!

Without a name, and all unknown,
Fair streamlet, though thou art,
Be still unchristen'd! but I'll keep
Thy murmurs in my heart.
My story of thy pilgrimage
Will to the careless tell,
How much of love and beauty in
Unnoted things do dwell.

THE BRAMBLE.

Be the bramble in the berry,
Or be it in the flower,—
Or be it bare of leaf and bud
Waved by the winter shower;
That creeping bush that lowly is,
As lowly well can be,
It hath a charm—a history—
A tale that pleases me!

When black grew bramble-berries,
Some twenty years ago,
The dawning often saw us set
Where mountain waters flow;
And when the gruesome gloaming came
To keek into our creel,
It found a fouth o' spotted trout
Whilk we had tackled weel!

The bramble-berries were our food,
And water was our wine,
The linnet to the self-same bush
Came after us to dine.
As down the glen at e'en we gaed,
The lammies round us bleated,
And we, wi' blithesome hearts, their word
To ilka rock repeated!

And when awa' we used to gang
By fieldpaths green and lane,
The bramble flower'd beside our feet,
And mantled tree and stane;
And wi' the hedgerow, oak, and thorn,
Its branches twisted were,
That scarcely through the wall of leaves,
Could breathe the caller air!

Then be the bramble-berry black,
Or be it in the flower,
I love its humble lowliness,
For sake o' days run ower:
And grow it in the woods sae green,
Or grow it on the brae,
I like to meet the bramble bush
Where'er my footsteps gae!

ALICE.*

My breast is press'd to thine, Alice,
My arm is round thee twined;
Thy breath dwells on my lip, Alice,
Like clover-scented wind:

* These lines were addressed by Nicoll to his wife. They were sent from Leeds to a friend in Edinburgh, some time after his marriage, and have never appeared till now.

Love glistens in thy sunny e'e,
And blushes on thy brow;
Earth's Heaven is here to thee and me,
For we are happy now!

Thy cheek is warm and saft, Alice,
As the summer laverock's breast;
And Peace sleeps in thy soul, Alice,
Like the laverock on its nest!
Sweet! lay thy heart aboon my heart,
For it is a' thine ain;
That morning love it gi'es to thee,
Which kens nae guile or stain!

Ilk starn in yonder lift, Alice,
Is a love-lighted e'e,
Fill'd fu' o' gladsome tears, Alice,
While watching thee and me.
This twilight hour the thoughts run back,
Like moonlight on the streams,
Till the o'erladen heart grows grit
Wi' a' its early dreams!

Langsyne amang the hills, Alice,
Where wave the breckans green,
I wander'd by the burn, Alice,
Where fairy feet had been,—
While o'er me hung a vision sweet,
My heart will ne'er forget—
A dream o' Summer twilight times
When flowers wi' dew were wet!

I thought on a' the tales, Alice,
O' Woman's love and faith;
Of Truth that smiled at Fear, Alice,
And Love that conquer'd Death;
Affection blessing hearts and hames,
When joy was far awa,
And Fear and Hate; but Love, O Love!
Aboon and over a'!

And then I thought wi' me, Alice,
Ane walk'd in beauty there—
A being made for love, Alice,
So pure, and good, and fair—
Who shared my soul—my every hour
O' sorrow and o' mirth;
And when that dream was gone, my heart
Was lonely on the earth!

Ay, lonely grew the world, Alice—
A dreary hame to me;
Without a bush or bield, Alice,
Or leafy sheltering tree;
And aye as sough'd life's raging storm,
Wi' keen and eerie blaw,
My soul grew sad, and cold my heart,
I wish'd to be awa'.

But light came o'er my way, Alice,
And life grew joy to me;
The daisy in my path, Alice,
Unclosed its gentle e'e;

Love breath'd in ilka wind that blew,
And in ilk birdie's sang;
Wi' sunny thoughts o' summer time
The blithesome heart grew thrang.

My dreams o' youth and love, Alice,
Were a' brought back again;
And Hope upraised its head, Alice,
Like the violet after rain:
A sweeter maid was by my side
Than things of dreams can be,
First, precious love to her I gave,
And, Alice, thou wert she!

Nae lip can ever speak, Alice,
Nae tongue can ever tell,
The sumless love for thee, Alice,
With which my heart doth swell!
Pure as the thoughts of infants' souls,
And innocent and young;
Sic love was never tauld in sangs,
Sic sangs were never sung!

My hand is on thy heart, Alice,
Sae place thy hand in mine;
Now, welcome weal and woe, Alice,
Our love we canna tine.
Ae kiss! let others gather gowd
Frae ilka land and sea;
My treasure is the richest yet,
For, Alice, I ha'e thee!

THE DYING MAIDEN.

THE winds are soughin' o'er the hills,
The burns come gushin' doun—
The kelpie in the drumlie weil
Is singin' his eerie croon!
Sae sharp an' cauld the nippin' sleet
Blaws o'er the leafless lea,
An' Death, frae out the darksome grave,
Is callin' upon me!

O! mither, stand ye at my head—
Gang, sister, to my feet;
An', Willie, sit by my bedside,
But dinna moan an' greet.
I would like to look on those I love,
Sae lang as I can see,—
As the snaw-drap fades 'mang the lave awa',
Sae I would like to dee!

O! this is a bright an' glorious earth,
An' I ha'e lo'ed it weel—
I ha'e lo'ed to sleep on my mither's breast,
By my mither's knee to kneel:
An' I ha'e lo'ed thee, sister fair,
Wi' mair than a sister's love;
An' how I lo'ed thee, Willie dear,
The Angels ken above!

An' I ha'e dream'd o' comin' years,
When ane we twa should be,—
When Grief should sadden, Joy rejoice
Alike baith thee an' me—
When we should bear ae heart, ae hope,
Ae burden, an' ae name;
An' gang a-field thegither aye,
An' come thegither hame!

An' I ha'e dream'd o' bairnies fair,
Wi' een as blithe as thine—
An' hair like gowd, an' rosie lips,
An' lovin' hearts like mine:
An I ha'e heard their voices sweet
Say "Mither!" unto me,
An' seen them turn an', smilin', say,
"My Father!" unto thee!

An', Willie, ae fond wish ha'e I—
Though I would like awa'—
To live, that I my love for thee
Sae measureless might shaw.
My love for thee! it can be known
To mine own heart alone,—
A star o' love an' gladness, thou
For ever o'er me shone!

My voice is wearin' faint an' low;
Sae, Willie, ere I gang,

You'll promise me, when I am laid
The kirkyard yird amang,
To come at e'en, when o'er the glen
The birks their shadows cast,
An' sit upo' my grave, an' think
O' me an' moments past.

Awa', awa, to yonder Land,
My soul is wearin' now;
But 'mid yon Holiness an' Joy,
I'll aye be watchin' you.
An', if alane ye e'er be left,
In sickness or in wae,
Mind, Willie, that a spirit's hand
Doth lead ye night an' day.

Kiss ance again this burnin' brow;
An let me look upon
The lip—the cheek—the hazel eye
I've prized in moments gone!
My mither! ope the casement wide
That I may see the lea
Where gowans grow:—The Gates o' Light
Are open now to me!

A WOODLAND WALK.

The blackbird's song is bursting from the brake,
And morning breezes bear it far away;
The early sunbeam from its breast doth shake
The floating veil of dewy mist so gray;
The dun deer wanders, like a frighten'd fay,
Through dingles deep and wild, where linnets sing;
Ah! who would slumber, who along can stray,
Where mighty oaks their branches o'er him fling,
To which the diamond dew, in pearlings bright, doth cling?

How beautiful! the green corn-fields are waving,
The clouds of dawn are floating on the sky;
The fearful hare its hidden couch is leaving,
And, sporting, to the clover-field doth hie:
Beneath the morning sun the waters lie,
Like treasur'd sunbeams in a woody nook!
God's earth is glorious; and how bless'd am I
Who love it all? On what I love I look,
And joy runs through my heart, like yon calm, tinkling brook.

The cottage-hearths are cold, the peasant sleeps,
But all the mighty woodlands are awake;
Within its hermitage the primrose sleeps,
And with the dew the beech-trees' branches shake,
As through the wood my devious path I take;

The velvet grass a fairy carpet seems,
On which, through leafy curtains, light doth break,
Now bright and strong, and now in fitful gleams,
As 'mid realities come fancy's fairest dreams.

Now stooping 'neath the branches wet with dew—
Now o'er the open forest-glades I go—
Now listening to the cushat's wailing coo—
Now starting from its lair the bounding roe;
And now I hear the breezes, to and fro,
Making among the leaves a pleasant din;
Or find myself where silent streamlets flow,
Like hermits, wandering these wild-woods within—
While hoar and aged trees bend o'er each little linn.

The lakelet of the forest I have left,
Sleeping, like beauty, in a branchy bower:
The woodland opens:—Crumbling all, and cleft,
There stands the ruin'd Abbey's lonely tower,
To speak of vanish'd pomp, exhausted power—
To hear these winds among the leaflets blow
With the same tone as in its proudest hour—
To see the flowers within the forest grow,
As when the fallen reigned—a thousand years ago!

Decaying, roofless walls! and is this all
That Desolation's blighting hand hath left
Of tower, and pinnacle, and gilded hall?
The everlasting rocks by time are cleft—
Within each crevice spiders weave their weft;

The wandering gipsy comes to hide him here,
When he from plunder'd housewife's stores has reft
The needful elements of gipsy cheer;
For ghost of Abbot old the gipsy doth not fear.

Where are the glancing eyes that here have beam'd?
Where are the hearts which whilom here have beat?
Where are the shaven monks, so grim who seem'd?
Where are the sitters in the Abbot's seat?
Where are the ceaseless and unnoted feet,
That wore a pavement-path with kneeling prayers?
Where is the coffin—where the winding sheet—
And monuments which nobles had for theirs,
When death drew nigh, and closed life's long account of cares?

The ivy clings around the ruin'd walls
Of cell, and chapel, and refectory;
An oak-tree's shadow, cloud-like, ever falls
Upon the spot where stood the altar high:
The chambers all are open to the sky;
A goat is feeding where the praying knelt;
The daisy rears its ever open eye
Where the proud Abbot in his grandeur dwelt:
These signs of time and change the hardest heart might melt.

Is this a cell?—Offended GOD to serve
By the heart's crucifixion, here have tried
Self-immolated men, who would not swerve,
But in the impious work serene have died:
A glory on the lowly wall doth bide;

For though the hypocrite hath shuffled here,
Here, too, from earnest lips did often glide
The words of men mistaken, but sincere,
Who, with pure spirits, tried to fight man's battle here.

The buttercups are lifting up their heads
Upon the floor of the confessional,
Where came the worshipper, with counted beads,
Upon his knees in penitence to fall—
Where came the great to listen unto all,
And scoff or pray, as good or ill was he.
Could words come forth of that time-stricken wall,
Some wondrous tales retold again would be:
The maiden's simple love—the feat of villany.

This is the chapel where the matin hymn
Was chanted duly for a thousand years,
Till faith grew cold and doubtful—truth grew dim—
Till earnest hope was wither'd up by sneers.
Within it now no glorious thing appears:
But as the dewy wind blows sweetly by,
Upon the thoughtful list'ner's joyful ears
Doth come a sweet and holy symphony,
And Nature's choristers are chanting masses high!

Grow up, sweet daisies, on the silent floor;
Fall down, dark ivy, over every wall;
Oak, send thy branches out at every door;
Goat, from its chambers to thy mate do call,
Power reign'd in might, and never fear'd a fall.

And where is it? And what is here to-day?
Truth triumphs over mitre, crown, and all;
Mind rent its iron fetters all away—
The tyrants, proud and high—where, at this hour, are they?

Old walls and turrets, moulder silently,
Till not a trace of all your state remain!——
The throstle's song, from yonder spreading tree,
Doth call me to the woodlands once again;
Louder doth rise the blackbird's passing strain,
And gladness from its sacred heart doth flow,
Till music falls, like summer's softest rain,
On all that lives and suffers here below,
Making a flower upon the lonest pathway grow!

The sun is higher in the morning sky—
His beams embrace the mossy-trunkëd trees;
Yonder the squirrel, on the elm so high,
Frisketh about in the cool morning breeze—
Down peeps his diamond eye—amazed, he sees
A stranger in his solitary home;
And now he hides behind the oaken trees—
And now he forth upon a branch doth come,
To crack his beechen-nuts, and watch me as I roam.

The hawthorn hangs its clusters round me now,
Through which the sky peeps sweetly, sweetly in;
Through the green glades doth come the cattle's low
From the rich pastures of the meadow green.
Look up!—aloft, the twittering birds are seen

Upon the branches, their wild matins singing:
Look down! the grass is soft and thick, I ween;
And flowers around each old tree-root are springing,
Wood fancies, wild and sweet, to the lone wanderer bringing.

And here are rich blaeberries, black and wild,
Beneath the beech-tree's thickest branches growing;
This makes me once again a wayward child,
A pilgrimage into the woodland going—
The haunt of squirrel and of wood-mouse knowing,
And plucking black blaeberries all the day,
Till eastward mountain-shadows night was throwing,
And sending me upon my homeward way,
Fill'd, both in soul and sense, with the old forest gray.

I must away, for I have loiter'd long
Amid the wood, and by the ruins old:
I must away, for far the sky along
The sun doth pour his beams of brightest gold.
Farewell, sweet glades, wild dingles, grassy wold—
Squirrel and blackbird, linnet and throstle, too—
Farewell, ye woodland streamlets, pure and cold—
Sweet cooing cushat—primrose wet with dew—
To woodland thoughts and things a sweet, a short adieu!*

* It may be proper to mention, that this poem, like all those composed in the last busy and suffering year of Nicoll's life, is written in pencil; and is what he must have considered unfinished. Yet the Editor could not feel justified in suppressing a composition so rich in descriptive beauty, that it all but rivals some of his Scottish moorland landscapes.

PART V.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THOMAS CLARKSON.*

MAN of the bold, brave heart!
GOD gifted thee with stemless will to dare,
And to achieve. Men ne'er successless were
Who, with thy great endeavour, join'd a pure,
High, holy heart like thine, that could endure
Hatred, and scorn, and toil that would have crush'd
A weak, despairing spirit to the dust.
And now!
Time tells thy name unto Eternity;—
A noble man reveal'd,
Thy soul of light unseal'd,
Thy life a battle-field,
Where fearless manhood set a race from bondage free!

* This poem was sent to Laverock Bank with the following note, and, after Nicoll's death, was published in *Tait's Magazine*, in an article relating to Clarkson:—"The foregoing lines were suggested by the story Mrs. J—— told me on Saturday of Clarkson. When Wilberforce asked him if ever he thought of the welfare of his soul, he answered—'I can think of nothing save those poor slaves in the West Indies.'"

Man of the dauntless soul!
Great in resistless goodness as was HE
Who came like summer forth of Galilee!——
Who saves *one* living thing is ever bless'd;
Good actions soothe, like angel songs, his rest;
And good men worship round the hero's grave,
Who lived and died *one* land of earth to save!——

But thou!
Found a whole race of God-created men
Slaves, bound and scourged, and vile with every stain—
And now,
They tell what one soul-strengthen'd man can do!
That race is fetterless
Thou pitiedst in distress;
Thee, saviour, they bless,
Great, Christ-like, pure and holy, good and true!

Man of the stainless life!
True hearts adore thy faithful Earnestness,
Thy Hope, that, 'midst all trials, ne'er grew less,
Thy thoughtful Love that hatred never quench'd,
And perseverance;—power that would have wrench'd
Aught good thy heart desired from Fortune's hand:—
Chance, Fate, and Change, determin'd men command.

But thou!
Hadst nobler aims than those the foolish prize;
Lov'dst mightier deeds than little men devise!
And now,

Giver of Freedom, who shall stand with thee?
Greater than thronëd kings,
Time o'er thy memory flings
Glorious imaginings!
A countless race arise and say, *He* made us free!

THOUGHTS AND FANCIES.

MILTON. A SONNET.

BLIND, glorious, aged Martyr, Saint, and Sage!
The Poet's mission GOD reveal'd to thee,
To lift men's souls to Him—to make them free;—
With Tyranny and Grossness war to wage—
A worshipper of Truth and Love to be—
To reckon all things nought but these alone;—
To nought but Mind and Truth to bow the knee—
To make the soul a love-exalted throne!
Man of the noble spirit!—Milton, thou
All this didst do! A living type thou wert
Of what the soul of man to be may grow—
The pure perfection of the love-fraught heart!
Milton! from GOD's right hand, look down and see
For these, how men adore and honour thee!

DESPONDENCY. A SONNET.

"Shall I be crush'd,
While in Eternity there's standing room?"

O! I am weary of this grief-fraught life,
With all its burdens of down-crushing care—
Its joyless peace—its ever-shouting strife—
Its day dark-clouded, even when most fair:
I wish this weary spirit were away
From all this Change, and Woe, and empty Noise,
Where Grief comes often, and where Gladness cloys—
Where Friendship changes, and where Love doth lay
Its trust on shadows—yea, where Hope doth glow
To burn the heedless heart it shineth on—
Where Disappointment, clad in garb of snow,
Snatches our hoped-for Blessings every one!
Cold Earth! I'll lay me down upon thy breast,
And dying, go to GOD, and be at rest!

THE MORNING STAR.

THY smile of beauty, Star!
Brings gladness on the gloomy face of night—
Thou comest from afar,
Pale Mystery! so lonely and so bright,

A thing of dreams—a vision from on high—
A virgin spirit—light—a type of purity!

Star! nightly wanderest thou
Companionless along thy far cold way:—
From Time's first breath till now,
On thou hast flitted like an ether-fay!
Where is the land from whence thou first arose;
And where the place of light to which thy pathway goes?

Pale Dawn's first messenger!
Thou prophet-sign of brightness yet to be!
Thou tellest Earth and Air
Of Light and Glory following after thee;
Of smiling Day 'mong wild green woodlands sleeping;
And GOD's own sun, o'er all, its tears of brightness weeping!

Sky sentinel! when first
The Nomade Patriarch saw thee from his hill
Upon his vision burst,
Thou wast as pure and fair as thou art still;
And changeless thou hast looked on race, and name,
And nation, lost since then—but *Thou* art yet the same!

Night's youngest child! fair gem!
The hoar astrologer o'er thee would cast
His glance, and to thy name
His own would join; then tremble when thou wast

In darkness; and rejoice when, like a bride,
Thou blush'd to Earth—and thus the dreamer dreamed
and died!

Pure Star of Morning Love!
The daisy of the sky's blue plain art thou;
And thoughts of youth are wove
Round thee, as round the flowers that freshly blow
In bushy dells, where thrush and blackbird sing—
Flower-Star, the dreams of youth and heaven thou back
dost bring!

Star of the Morn! for thee
The watcher by affection's couch doth wait;
'Tis thine the bliss to see
Of lovers fond who 'mid the broom have met;
Into the student's home thine eye doth beam;
Thou listenest to the words of many a troubled dream!

Lone thing!—yet not more lone
Than many a heart which gazeth upon thee,
With hopes all fled and gone—
Which loves not now, nor seeks beloved to be.
Lone, lone thou art—but we are lonelier far,
When blighted by deceit the heart's affections are!

Mysterious Morning Star!
Bright dweller in a gorgeous dreamy home,
Than others nobler far—
Thou art like some free soul, which here hath come

Alone, but glorious, pure, and disenthrall'd—
A spark of Mind, which GOD through earth to heaven
hath call'd!

Pure Maiden Star! shine on,
That dreams of beauty may be dream'd of thee!
A home art thou—a throne—
A land where fancy ever roameth free—
A God-sent messenger—a light afar—
A blessed beam—a smile—a gem—the Morning Star!

THE EXILE'S SONG.

THIS land is rich—baith tree an' bower,
An' hill an' plain, are cover'd o'er
Wi' flowers o' monie, monie dyes,
Till maist it seems a paradise,
Where Love an' Beauty make their hame
Beside ilk flowin' silver stream:—
I ken the land is heavenlie:
But O! it's no my ain countrie!

Thae hills are green:—nae heather there
Waves in the caller mornin' air;—
Fu' pleasantly thae streamlets rin;
But O! they want the cheerfu' din

O' hame's sweet burns, that ever sung
To me my ain, my mountain tongue:—
I ken the land is fair to see!
But O! it's no my ain countrie!

The bonnet doesna hap the brow—
The plaidie wraps na bosoms true—
The harp's sweet tones 'mang echoes stray
Where I would like the pipes to play—
The nightingale sings a' night lang
Where I would like the throstle's sang:—
The land is fair as fair can be—
But O! it's no my ain countrie!

When Mirth's warm voice is laughin' hie
The groan o' Care doth danton me—
I canna rest, I canna smile,
Awa' frae yonder rocky isle:
An exile's waefu' fate is mine,
Wha for his hame doth ever pine:—
My heart is sick, an' I will dee
If I win na to my ain countrie!

THE DEATH-SONG OF HOFER.

My hour of life is nearly past,—
I shrink not from my doom:

The men of many lands will make
A pilgrim-shrine my tomb;
My name will be in coming time
The watchword of the free;
The mountains of my rugged home
My monuments will be.

I have not borne a tyrant's thrall,
But stood for liberty—
Among our mountains and our rocks,
Where slaves can never be:
I stood, as stood the Switzer bold,
When Uri's horn did swell,—
I fought, I bled—my name will live
With that of William Tell.

Death! what is death in freedom's cause?
For thee, mine own Tyrol,
Had I a thousand, thousand lives,
Oh! I would give the whole.
I die, as men should proudly do,
For home and liberty,—
I sow the seed that yet shall grow
And make my country free.

Farewell, my craggy native hills,
My children all, farewell:
That Hofer was your father's name
Full proudly ye may tell.

Farewell, ye mountains heart-enshrined,—
  God! shield a freeman's soul!
I die in joy—I die for thee—
  My own—my wild Tyrol.

THE SWISS MOTHER TO HER SON.

"Fleet is thy foot, my only son;
  Thou art a mountain child;
Thy mother's breasts have suckled thee
  'Mid rocks and deserts wild—
Where shouting winds the echoes deep
  In dells and caves awoke—
Where every sound to Heaven that rose
    Of Freedom spoke!

"Look up, my son! yon cloud-crown'd rock
  Is mantled o'er with snow;
And from its breast the avalanche
  Careering down doth go!
Look down! a thousand pleasant vales
  Are sleeping 'neath thine eye,
And happy homes where Alpine streams
    Are rushing by!

"Look round, my son! your mother's cot
  Is peeping from the trees;—

Your sister, in its rose-wreath'd porch,
Is kneeling on her knees!—
Look on our lightning-riven peaks—
Our mountain-pastures lone!—
My only son! what land of earth
Is like thine own?

"My noble boy, for such a land
Who would not dare and die?—
My son!—I see thy swelling breast—
I see thy flashing eye!—
Thy drink has been the mountain-stream,
Thou chamois-hunter free!
Thou'rt worthy, like thy sire, to die
For Liberty!

"My son! a field is lost and won—
A field for Freedom fought;—
The herdsmen of our thousand hills
A mighty work have wrought:
But mail-clad are the Tyrants yet,
And mighty is the foe!
Arouse thee, then, brave youth, and cry
'For Uri, ho!'

"My son! thy father lifeless lies;
But yet no tear I shed!
When we are free, thy mother, boy,
Will mourn the glorious dead!

And thou!—go take thy father's sword—
To battle, with the free!
And fall or conquer, like thy sire,
For Home and me!"

"He hath buckled on his father's sword—
My own, my noble boy—
He hath turn'd him to the Switzer camp
With all a freeman's joy.
O! hearts like his and hands like his
Will free our mountains gray!—
My daughter, with thy mother kneel,
For him to pray!"

THE GERMAN BALLAD-SINGER.

Like a passing bird with a sweet wild song,
Thou hast come to my native land;
And amid the noisy crowded streets
Of the stranger thou dost stand:
And thou pourest forth a ballad lay
Of the land where the laden vine
Dips its rich ripe fruit and its sheltering leaves
In thine own beloved Rhine.

'Tis a tale of the deeds of other times—
Of the proud high hearts of old;

Which thy mother thine infant eyes to close,
  At the gloamin often told:
Of a craggy steep, and a castle strong—
  Of a warder drunk with wine;
And a valorous knight, and his ladye-love,—
  By thine own beloved Rhine.

Proud singer! I see thy flashing eyes,—
  Thou art thinking on that river;
The rush of its waters deep and strong
  Shall dwell in thine ears for ever:
Thou art sitting in dreams by that stream afar,
  And a fresh bright wreath you twine
Of the happy flowers that for ever blow,
  By thine own beloved Rhine.

Thou hast changed thy song to a soft low strain,
  And thy cheeks are wet with tears;
The home of thy youth, in thy fatherland,
  'Neath its sheltering tree appears!—
And thou seest thy parents far away,
  And thy sister, loved like mine;
O! they long for thee as thou for them
  And thine own beloved Rhine.

Thy song is done—we are parted now,
  And may never meet again;
But, wandering boy, thou hast touch'd a heart,
  And thy song was not in vain:

God's blessings on thee, poor minstrel boy,
  May a happy lot be thine!—
May thy heart go uncorrupted back
  To thine own beloved Rhine!

THE MOTHER'S MEMORIES OF HER INFANT CHILD.

In the casket of my soul I keep
  Thy form and face, my child—
Like a promise-star of love on me
  Frae heaven thou lang hast smiled;
I see thy mirthfu' glance—thy hair
  Spread o'er thy brow sae wan—
And thy cherry lip;—but I canna kiss
  My dove—my Mary Ann!

Like a pleasant thought within the heart,
  Thou in my bosom slept;
And o'er thee dreaming there, my watch
  Of gladness aft I kept!
In sunlit hours, thy artless words,
  As round my knee thou ran,
Were sweet wild music to my soul—
  My lovesome Mary Ann!

The jewel of my young life's crown—
The flower of hope wast thou;
But the gem Affection prized is lost—
The flower is withered now!
Short was thy stay in thy mother's hame,
And short thy earthly span:
But monie a heart was in love with thee,
My dearest Mary Ann!

How thou wouldst clasp thy mother's neck,
Thy mother's lips to kiss!—
To be by thee in thy love caress'd
Was a dream of heaven-like bliss;
And deeper joy than mine, my dove,
Ne'er bless'd since time began,
As I clasp'd, and kiss'd, and gazed upon
My infant Mary Ann!

My life! my love! my precious babe!
How dear thou wast to me
That mother only knows whom God
Hath bless'd with sic as thee!
As the violet fades and the daisy dies
When the blast of Yule has blawn;
The cauldrife hands of Death ha'e stown
My darling Mary Ann!

A ROMAUNT.

The evening bell hath the curfew toll'd,
And the cloud of night on the earth hath roll'd;
The sea waves fall on the sandy shore,
Like sullen things, with an angry roar:
'Tis the lonesome, sleeping, midnight hour—
Why beams yon light from the castle tower?
Why tarries that boat on the surfy strand?
And why doth each rower clutch a brand?

Two forms appear through the dusky night—
'Tis a rover free and a lady bright:
She hath left her father's castle hall,
His broad fair lands, and his riches all,
The bride of a wanderer wild to be,
And to make her home on the tameless sea:—
Now the boat is launch'd on its ocean way,
And onward it speeds o'er the waters gray.

The morning is up, but the clouded sun
Throws not a ray on yon castle dun;
And oh! there is weeping and wailing there—
The father's moan and the mother's prayer;
For never again in their home shall be
The lost one, who sails on the foaming sea:—
The flower hath been snapp'd from its parent stem,
And the garden hath lost its brightest gem.

Now in bright sunshine—now in gloomy shade—
That ship on the deep her home hath made:
She has felt the gales of many a land,
And her prow has look'd on many a strand:
But her hour hath come—the wild winds rave—
There swims on her track a giant wave:
And the rover wild, and his fair ladye,
Are sleeping now in the dark green sea!

THE MOSSY STANE.

THAT ill-faur'd lump of mossy stane
Has lain amang the breckans lane,
And neither groan'd nor made a mane,
For years six thousand!
That 's fortitude—the stoics, gane,
Wad wagg'd their pows on't!

The heather-blossom fades awa'—
The breathing winds of Summer blaw—
The plover's wail—the muircock's craw—
I'll lay a bodle,
It snoozes on through rain and snaw,
Nor fykes its noddle!

It 's pleasant wi' a stane to crack,
It ne'er objects to word or fact;

And then they ha'e an unco knack
Of listening well—
They a' the story dinna tak'
Upo' themsel'.

Aweel, whinstane! since there ye lay,
The world 's gane monie an unco way:
We've a' been heathens—now we pray,
And sing and wheeple,
And mak' a lang to do and say
Beside the steeple!

And there cam' men o' meikle power,
Wha gart the frighted nations glowr,
And did wi' swords mankind devour:
Snoozed ye through all?
Faith! ye think little of a stour,
Upon my saul!

Stane! if your lugs could better hear,
I doubt me if 't wad mend your cheer,
If ye but kent—I fear, I fear—
That sorrow 's round ye;
Though hard as tyrants' hearts, fu' sair
The tale wad wound ye!

How priests, and kings, and superstition,
Have marr'd and ruin'd man's condition,
If I could tell, ye'd need a sneeshin'
To clear your een:

Lord, stane! but they deserve the creeshin'
They'll get, I ween!

Look, there's the sun! the lambkins loupin'
Are o'er amang the heather coupin';
The corbies 'mang the rocks are roupin'
Sae dull and drowsy;
This Summer day, my cracks, I'm houpin',
To life will rouse ye!

Na, there ye lie—nought troubles thee:
Ye hae some use as well as me,
Nae doubt; but what that use can be
The thought doth wrack me;
Wi' a' my een I canna see,
The devil tak' me!

I'm sure there's naething made in vain—
No even a mossy auld whinstane:
Ye Powers aboon! I ken, I ken—
Auld stane sae bonnie,
Ye just was made that I fu' fain
Might rhyme upon ye.

THE WANDERER.

WHERE roam the feet of the Distant One—the Wanderer far away?
Doth a tropic forest shelter him from the blaze of a tropic day?
Doth he rest 'mong the glorious golden flowers of an Indian valley lone?
Doth he drink of the Arab's desert fount? O! where hath the Wanderer gone?

He went forth from his father's house while Hope was burning in his heart—
He went forth in joy while exultingly from his lips a song did part.
Hath the Hope decay'd? Hath the Brightness fled? Hath the spirit sorrow known?
Or rejoices he in the sunlight still?—O! where hath the Wanderer gone?

Hath he drunk the spirit-draught of Love from the eye of an Indian maid?
Doth he linger now with a dear-loved one in an Eastern forest's shade?
Hath he then forgot his infant dreams and his native mountains lone,
For the deep dark glance of a maiden's eye?—O! where hath the Wanderer gone?

Back to the streams of his youthhood's land, why hath not the Wanderer come,
To rejoice in his mother's smile again, and to sit in his father's home?
Hath his cheek grown pale? Hath his eye grown dim? Doth he sleep beneath the stone?
Is his noble heart all mouldering now?—O! where hath the Wanderer gone?

O! sings he the songs of another land, or remembers he yet his own?
Hath the veil of dim Forgetfulness on his once-warm heart been thrown?
Why tarries he where a sister's eye hath never o'er him shone?—
Where a brother's voice he hath never heard?—O! where hath the Wanderer gone?

Pure Stars! as ye shine with unsleeping eye, can ye tell us ought of him?
Bright Sun! doth he watch in a distant land your evening light grow dim?
Strong Winds! have ye fann'd his cheek as o'er the earth ye have hurried on?
Sun, Winds, and Stars! can ye answer us?—O! where hath the Wanderer gone?

The sound of his foot shall be heard no more in his mourning Father's hall—
His sweet young voice on his Mother's ear again shall never fall:

His steed untired in the stable stands, and his hound
may hunt alone;
For the woful voice of the Desolate calls, "O! where
hath the Wanderer gone?"

In a coral cave of the dark green sea, the Wanderer's
bed is made—
'Mong the mysteries old of the mighty deep, the waves
his couch have spread;
And the tempest sweeps o'er his watery grave with a
drear and sullen moan,
And asks, with its wildly wailing voice, "O! where
hath the Wanderer gone?"

THE RUINED MANOR-HOUSE.

AGAINST the sky these walls their shadows cast,
Tottering and crumbling in their mossy age,
Like dim remembrances of moments past
Which Time hath almost swept from Memory's page:
Long ages they have faced the bitter blast,
As the stern Stoic bears the world's rage;
But now the ceaseless breath of cold Decay
Is wasting them, like snows of Spring, away!

Four walls!—four roofless walls!—and this is all
That Desolation's gathering hand hath left
Of tower, and pinnacle, and gilded hall;
The roof is gone—the wall of rock is cleft—

The moonlight through each crevice down doth fall,
Giving the spider light to weave its weft!
Is this the end of Pride, and Pomp, and Power?—
The vanity and glory of an hour!

Is this the hearth round which have often met
The Young, the Fair, the Manly, and the Gay?—
Is this the hall where dancers oft were set
With joyous Mirth, till broke the lagging day?
Are these the chambers of luxurious state,
Where men were far too proud to kneel and pray?
Is this the home where Joy both loud and free
From year to year so blithesome used to be?

Is this the hearth? A tree with fruit and flowers
Doth o'er it spread its branches, budding green!
Is this the hall? The nettle buildeth bowers
Where loathsome toad and beetle black are seen!
Are these the chambers? Fed by dankest showers
The slimy worm hath o'er them crawling been!
Is this the home? The owlet's dreary cry
Unto that asking makes a sad reply!

Where are the bright young eyes that here have beam'd?
Where are the happy hearts that here have beat?
Where is the Warrior, grim and proud who seem'd?
Where is the sitter in the Old Man's seat?
Where is the Joy that like rich sunlight gleam'd?
Where are the faces fair, the nimble feet?

Where are the Love, the Glory, and the Light,
That here had built for them a temple bright?

Bright eyes are dim, and mouldering in the clay;
The happy hearts are moveless evermore;—
The Warrior,—Death hath met him in the fray;—
The Old Man sits no longer by the door;
The light of Joy grew dim, and pass'd away;
Fair faces keep not now the smile they wore;
Now Love, and Light, and Glory, all have gone;
And nought remains but moss-clad dreary stone!

Is this the whole? and has this work been wrought
To fill our hearts with gloom while dwelling here?—
Amid decaying ruins have we sought
And found no search-rewarding jewel near?—
No! we have learn'd a lesson cheaply bought—
A lesson which our gloom doth brightly cheer,—
That though this earth be Woe and Vanity,
There is a Brighter Land beyond yon Holy Sky!

THE SAXON CHAPEL.

A building rear'd by Saxon hands!
A fane, where Saxon hearts might pray!
They worshipped here long ages past—
We worship here to-day!

Since that low window-arch was bent,
There have been many a rise and fall;
And this lone temple of the poor
Stands preaching over all!

The rude, rough Saxon rear'd it up
The temple of his God to be;
And here, in simple earnestness,
He came and bent the knee.

Then came the Norman, in his pride,
Attended by his Saxon slaves;
And then the priest of later times
Sang mass above their graves!

The mind grew free—the ancient faith,
With all its pomp and pageantry,
Fell down;—a spirit stern arose,
And said it should not be!

And now, to-day the peasant hind
Beside that lowly altar knelt;
And, 'neath that roof, had feelings such
As Normans, Saxons, felt!

Come, Saxon, in thy rude attire—
Come, Norman, in thy coat of mail—
Come, priest, with cross and counted beads—
And, Parson, do not fail.

Beneath one roof ye all have pray'd—
Upon one floor have bent the knee;
Your creeds are far asunder rent—
But come and answer me.

As then you knelt, did upward rise
Each heart in love and gratitude?
Did each, in different form and name,
Adore the true and good?

They answer, Yes! Then vanish all
Into oblivion once again,—
There is a holy lesson here;
I'll carry it to men!

The priest may sneer—the bigot curse—
I care not for the form and creed;
The earnest will be bless'd—the true
And pure, in word and deed!

The hands that rear'd these crumbling walls—
The hearts that long have ceased to live—
They did their part—a temple rear'd—
Which lessons bright doth give.

MADNESS.

Grief made its home within my breast
  Till my heart grew sad and cold—
Till my sunken cheek, and my dull, dim eye,
  Of its blighting presence told.

A blacker Fiend came mocking then :—
  It was madness in its ire;
And its maniac-hands my heart-strings wrench'd,
  And it wrapt my brain in fire :—

And it fought with Reason in my breast
  Till it had its direful will—
Till bound in its chains was the struggling soul,
  Which was wildly conscious still.

I spoke with Madness' raving voice,
  And I glared with Madness' eyes :
Flesh did its work, while the spirit wept
  O'er the body's sacrifice.

My feet and hands with chains were bound,
  And my body suffer'd blows;
And the dark Fiend shriek'd from the spirit's home
  As the lash in menace rose.

The eye that once look'd kind on me
Now fearful o'er me stole;
Then the Fiend would turn with a mocking laugh
To its trembling victim soul.

Months, years of torture such as this
I do remember now,
Till my hair grew white, and my body weak,
And wrinkled grew my brow:

And then there came a dreary blank
When all was dark within—
A howling night of unutter'd woe
Where a moonbeam could not win.

And in that night I had a dream:—
I thought that far away
From the dungeon deep—my torture-home—
On a morning I did stray.

I thought I lay within a wood,
In its glorious summer prime;
And I heard the voice of HIM who spans
Eternity and Time.

HE bade the Fiend resign its prey,
And the prison'd soul go free;
And the dream was o'er, for I stood restored
Beneath the forest tree!

LIFE'S PILGRIMAGE.

INFANT! I envy thee
Thy seraph smile, thy soul without a stain,—
Angels around thee hover in thy glee
A look of love to gain!

Thy paradise is made
Upon thy mother's bosom, and her voice
Is music, rich as that by spirits shed
When blessed things rejoice!

Bright are the opening flowers,—
Ay, bright as thee, sweet babe, and innocent,
They bud and bloom; and straight their infant hours,
Like thine, are done and spent!

BOY, infancy is o'er!—
Go with thy playmates to the grassy lea,
Let thy bright eye with yon far laverock soar,
And blithe and happy be!

Go, crow thy cuckoo notes
Till all the greenwood alleys loud are ringing—
Go, listen to the thousand tuneful throats
That 'mong the leaves are singing!

I would not sadden thee,
Nor wash the rose upon thy cheek with tears:
Go, while thine eye is bright—unbent thy knee—
Forget all cares and fears!

YOUTH, is thy boyhood gone?—
The fever hour of life at length has come,
And passion sits in reason's golden throne,
While sorrow's voice is dumb!

Be glad! it is thy hour
Of love ungrudging—faith without reserve—
And, from the Right, Ill hath not yet the power
To make thy footsteps swerve.

Now is thy time to know
How much of trusting goodness lives on earth,
And rich in pure sincerity to go
Rejoicing in thy birth!

Youth's sunshine unto thee—
Love, first and dearest, has unveil'd her face,
And thou hast sat beneath the trysting tree
In love's first fond embrace!

Enjoy thy happy dream,
For life hath not another such to give;
The stream is flowing—love's enchanted stream;
Live, happy dreamer, live!

Though sorrow dwelleth here,
And falsehood, and impurity, and sin,
The light of love, the gloom of earth to cheer,
Comes sweetly, sweetly in!

'Tis o'er—thou art a Man—
The struggle and the tempest both begin
Where he who faints must fail—he fight who can,
A victory to win!

Say, toilest thou for gold?
Will all that earth can give of drossy hues
Compensate for that land of love foretold,
Which Mammon makes thee lose?

Or waitest thou for power?
A proud ambition, trifler, doth thee raise
To be the gilded bauble of the hour
That fools may wond'ring gaze!

But would'st thou be a Man—
A lofty, noble, uncorrupted thing,
Beneath whose eye the false might tremble wan,
The good with gladness sing?

Go, cleanse thy heart, and fill
Thy soul with love and goodness; let it be
Like yonder lake, so holy, calm, and still,
And full of purity!

This is thy task on earth—
This is thy eager manhood's proudest goal;—
To cast all meanness and world-worship forth—
And thus exalt the soul.

'Tis manhood makes the man
A high-soul'd freeman or a fetter'd slave,
The Mind a temple fit for God to span,
Or a dark dungeon-grave!

God doth not man despise,
He gives him soul—mind—heart—that living flame;
Nurse it, and upwards let it brightly rise
To Heaven, from whence it came!

Go hence, go hence, and make
Thy spirit pure as morning, light and free!
The Pilgrim shrine is won, and I awake—
Come to the woods with me!

SONG FOR A SUMMER EVENING.

THERE's a drap o' dew on the blackbird's wing
Where the willows wave the burnie over,
And the happy bird its sang doth sing
By the wimpling waves that the green leaves cover.

Sing louder yet, thou bonnie, bonnie bird,
  There 's neither cloud nor storm to fear ye,
But thy sang, though glad as ear ever heard,
  Is wae to mine when I meet my dearie!

Yon laverock lilts 'mang the snawy clouds
  That float like a veil o'er the breast of heaven;
And its strain comes down to the summer woods
  Like the voice of the bless'd and God-forgiven!
Sing, laverock, sing thy maist holy sang,
  For the light o' heaven is round and near ye,
Syne song through thy fluttering heart will gang,
  As it runs through mine when I meet my dearie!

The daisy blinks by the broom-bush side,
  Pure as the eye o' a gladsome maiden—
Fair as the face o' a bonnie bride
  When her heart wi' the thoughts o' love is laden.
Bloom fairer yet, thou sweet lowly flower,
  There 's ne'er a heart sae hard as steer thee,
I will think o' thee in that gloaming hour
  When I meet 'mang the wild green woods my dearie!

IT'S NAE FUN, THAT!*

ANE CANTIE SANG.

YE may laugh brawly i' the now,
Ye may joke as you like;
But ye shouldna say the hinnie 's good
Afore ye tak' the bike.
Love does weel eneugh to joke about
When comes the gloamin' bat;
But marriage is an awfu' thing:—
It 's nae fun, *that!*

We twa are geyan young yet,
We ha'ena meikle gear,
And, if glaikitly we yokit,
We wad aye be toilin' sair;
Maybe poverty wad mak' us
Like our collie and the cat:—
An' tearfu' een and scartit lugs—
It 's nae fun, that!

* It may not be out of place here to state the circumstances under which the above "cantie sang" was written. In a company, one evening, in Edinburgh, where Mr. Nicoll was present, a young lady was very much rallied on the subject of marriage; till, thinking that the joke was carried a little too far, she put an end to the teasing by exclaiming —"It's nae fun, that!"—a phrase which at once caught the humour of the poet, and the song was produced that same night.

The men are in a hurry aye—
  Will ye gi'e a body time?
And yet, I needna forward look,
  I canna see a styme;
To gi'e a body's sel' awa'
  For—'od! I kenna what,
It gars a thoughtless lassie think—
  It's nae fun, that!

And now the cloud is on your brow,
  I shouldna vex you sae;
Yet in my last free maiden hour,
  Why mind you what I say?
My first love and my last are you,
  My lassie's heart you caught—
O! guess *my* love by what *ye* feel—
  It's nae fun, that!

SONNET TO MR. J. R. F.

Domestic love sits brooding o'er thy hearth,
  Like the fair cushat o'er the forest-boughs;
And happiness unto thy home is bound
  Close as the fragrance to the summer rose:
For woman's angel purity is there,
And woman's hand so soft and face so fair,

And woman's heart of love, and voice of song
Soft as the linnet's, hedge-row leaves among.
This heart so glad with thee in moments past,
Can wish for thee no better than thou hast;
But in this silent hour, when earth is gray,
To Him who gave it all this heart can pray:—
"Where Joy is *now*, oh! send no future pain—
May what is happy—happy aye remain!"

THE LINNET.

The songs of Nature, holiest, best are they!
The sad winds sighing through the leafy trees—
The lone lake's murmurs to the mountain breeze—
The streams' soft whispers, as they fondly stray
Through dingles wild and over flowery leas,
Are sweetly holy; but the purest hymn—
A melody like some old prophet-lay—
Is thine, poured forth from hedge, and thicket dim—
Linnet! wild Linnet!

The poor, the scorned and lowly, forth may go
Into the woods and dells, where leaves are green;
And 'mong the breathing forest flowers may lean,
And hear thy music wandering to and fro,
Like sunshine glancing o'er the summer scene.
Thou poor man's songster!—neither wealth nor power

Can match the sweetness thou around dost throw!
Oh! bless thee for the joy of many an hour—
Linnet! wild Linnet!

In sombre forest, gray and melancholy,
Yet sweet withal and full of love and peace,
And 'mid the furze wrapped in a golden fleece
Of blossoms, and in hedgerows green and lowly;
On thymy banks, where wild bees never cease
Their murmur-song, thou hast thy home of love!
Like some lone hermit, far from sin and folly,
'T is thine through forest fragrancies to rove—
Linnet! wild Linnet!

Some humble heart is sore and sick with grief,
And straight thou comest with thy gentle song
To wile the sufferer from his hate or wrong,
By bringing Nature's love to his relief.
Thou churmest by the sick child's window long,
Till racking pain itself be wooed to sleep;
And when away have vanished flower and leaf,
Thy lonely wailing voice for them doth weep—
Linnet! wild Linnet!

God saw how much of woe, and grief, and care,
Man's faults and follies on the earth would make;
And thee, sweet singer, for his creatures' sake
He sent to warble wildly everywhere,
And by thy voice our souls to love to wake.
Oh! blessed wandering spirit! unto thee

Pure hearts are knit, as unto things too fair,
And good, and beautiful of earth to be—
Linnet! wild Linnet!

DEATH.*

THE dew is on the Summer's greenest grass,
Through which the modest daisy blushing peeps;
The gentle wind that like a ghost doth pass,
A waving shadow on the corn-field keeps;
But I who love them all shall never be
Again among the woods, or on the moorland lea!

The sun shines sweetly—sweeter may it shine!——
Bless'd is the brightness of a Summer day;
It cheers lone hearts; and why should I repine,
Although among green fields I cannot stray!
Woods! I have grown, since last I heard you wave,
Familiar with death, and neighbour to the grave!

These words have shaken mighty human souls—
Like a sepulchre's echo drear they sound—
E'en as the owl's wild whoop at midnight rolls
The ivied remnants of old ruins round.
Yet wherefore tremble? Can the soul decay?—
Or that which thinks and feels in aught e'er fade away?

* This poem is imagined to be the last, or among the last, of Nicoll's compositions.

Are there not aspirations in each heart,
  After a better, brighter world than this?
Longings for beings nobler in each part—
  Things more exalted—steeped in deeper bliss?
Who gave us these? What are they? Soul! in thee
The bud is budding now for immortality!

Death comes to take me where I long to be;
  One pang, and bright blooms the immortal flower;
Death comes to lead me from mortality,
  To lands which know not one unhappy hour:—
I have a hope—a faith;——from sorrow here
I'm led by Death away—why should I start and fear?

If I have loved the forest and the field,
  Can I not love them deeper, better, there?
If all that Power hath made, to *me* doth yield
  Something of good and beauty—something fair—
Freed from the grossness of mortality,
May I not love them all, and better all enjoy?

A change from woe to joy—from earth to heaven,
  Death gives me this—it leads me calmly where
The souls that long ago from mine were riven
  May meet again! Death answers many a prayer.
Bright day! shine on—be glad:—Days brighter far
Are stretched before my eyes than those of mortals are!

I would be laid among the wildest flowers,
  I would be laid where happy hearts can come:——

The worthless clay I heed not; but in hours
Of gushing noontide joy, it may be, some
Will dwell upon my name, and I will be
A happy spirit there, Affection's look to see.

Death is upon me, yet I fear not now:—
Open my chamber window—let me look
Upon the silent vales—the sunny glow
That fills each alley, close, and copsewood nook:—
I know them—love them—mourn not them to leave;
Existence and its change my spirit cannot grieve!

THE END.

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